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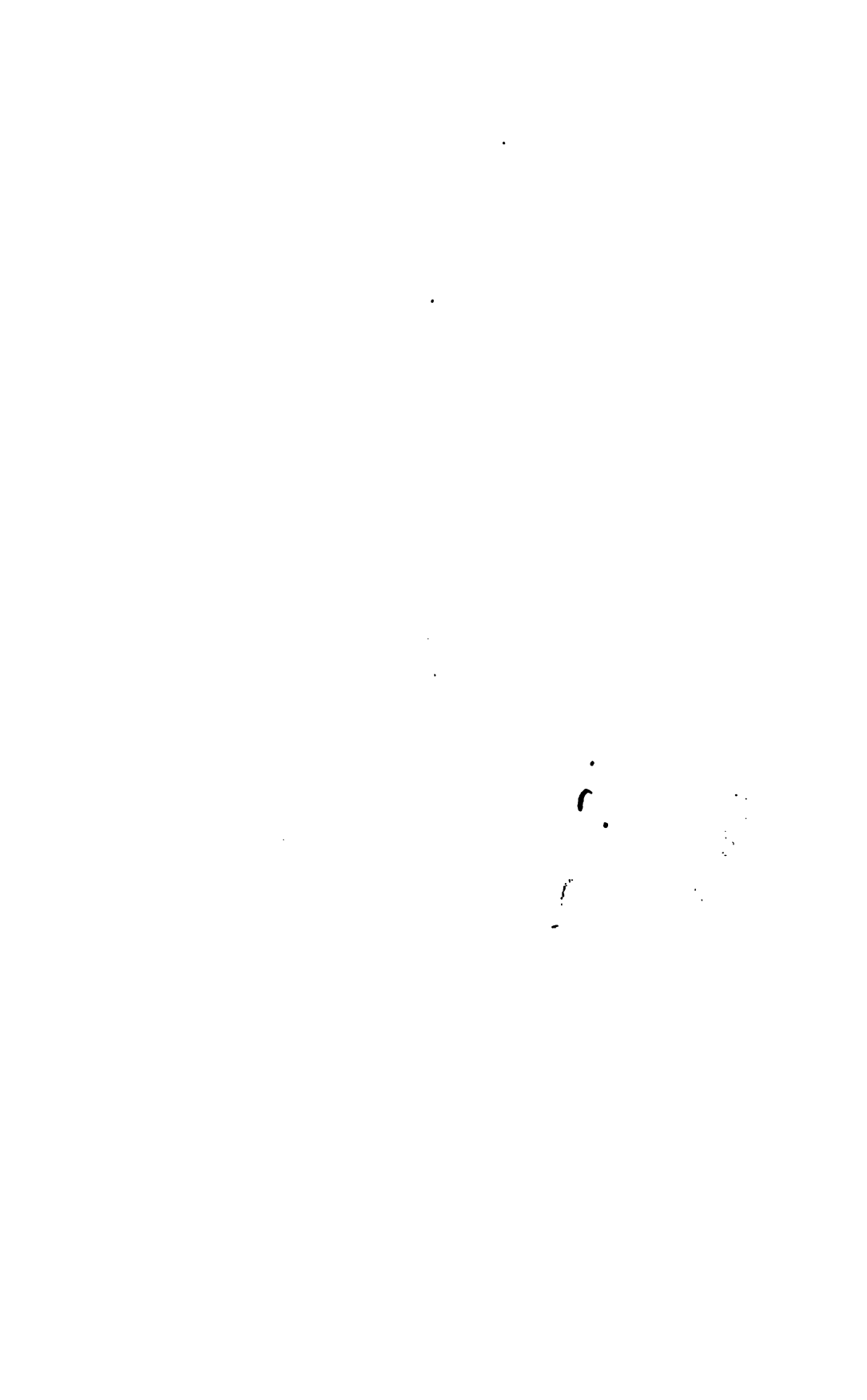
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SIDE-LIGHTS  
ON THE  
CONFLICTS OF METHODISM.

(Gregory)  
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# SIDE LIGHTS

## ON THE

# CONFLICTS OF METHODISM

DURING THE SECOND QUARTER OF THE NINETEENTH CENTURY  
1827—1852

*Taken chiefly from the Notes of the late Rev. Joseph Fowler  
of the Debates in the Wesleyan Conference*

A CENTENARY CONTRIBUTION TO THE CONSTITUTIONAL HISTORY  
OF METHODISM. WITH A BIOGRAPHICAL SKETCH

BY  
BENJAMIN GREGORY, D.D.

*President of the Conference, 1879*

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"I have great confidence in one individual who has been accustomed  
to take from year to year copious notes of the proceedings of Conference."—  
Dr. BUNTING (*Speech on Reporting, at Conference, 1849*).

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To

ALL FAIR-MINDED METHODISTS

**This Contribution**

TO

THE CONSTITUTIONAL HISTORY OF METHODISM

**Is Dedicated**

IN THE

CENTENARY YEAR OF "THE PLAN OF PACIFICATION"

AND THE

"LEEDS REGULATIONS."

*December, 1897.*



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SIDE LIGHTS  
ON THE  
CONFLICTS OF METHODISM.  
(1827—1852.)

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CHAPTER I.

THE REASON FOR THIS WRITING.

"It was a summer's evening,  
Old Kaspar's work was done;

And by him sported     •   •   •

His little grandchild   •   •   •

Then, looking up, she said :

    'Now, tell us all about the war,

    And what they killed each other for ?' "

—*Southey's "Battle of Blenheim."*

It seems a strange predicament to have to apologise for conferring a great boon on one's contemporaries and posterity by saving them from serious loss. But such is my position. No sooner was it known that it was proposed to publish extracts from the Conference Journals of the late Rev. Joseph Fowler, than there came forth the strongest remonstrances against any such a perilous procedure. The objections were that : (1) "*It would do harm,*" by which I found was meant—that it might modify to an extent the views which some had entertained and sought to propagate with regard to the merits of the questions in dispute and of the policy pursued in those disastrous times, which have left so little to be garnered, but the lessons they may teach. But it seems to me that those lessons should not be wastefully swept into the gulf into which the melancholy wreckage dropped. Even should the fresh historic light involve a readjustment of the balance of blame, why should not the readjustment be



allowed in the interests of historical truthfulness and ecclesiastical fair play? The due dispensing of blame and praise, of warning and encouragement, is a province of history as well as of administration.

We are told again that the lessons to be learnt from these discussions are not those which are needed at the present time, but, on the contrary, are inopportune and dangerous. I think it will be found that the practical inductions which flow naturally from the inner history of those troublous times are applicable at all times, and that most if not all of them are specially significant and admonitory now. Again, it should be borne in mind that if the materials for the authentic history of those times are not secured and set in order very soon, a partisan and pamphleteering presentation of the matter will take possession of the field. Some years ago we were assured by an eager partisan that "the time has not come for an history of our last great conflict," the context plainly showing that a history written in the interests of his own projects would be premature so long as anyone still lived who was capable of confronting one-sided statement with unchallengeable records and painfully remembered, because so deeply inburnt, personal observation and experience. I believe there are but three survivors of those terrible catastrophes who were behind the scenes at the time of their enactment. Of them my old friend Dr. Rigg has already broken ground upon the site of these rich historic excavations. In doing this he has deserved well of Methodism. But he has not found time to dig far below the surface, or to exhume and put *in situ* and in juxtaposition, the figures and historic tablets he has partly brought to light. My own spade will still further clear the ground, and confirm and carry on his shrewd researches.

It is the bane of human history that it has been written to such a large extent with an apologetic purpose, or from a party point of view, or to sustain some one political hypothesis and discredit or explode some other. This misleading and bewildering perversion is not confined to domestic and contemporary chronicles. Thus Mitford, from amidst the arches and the columns of the Abbey which had become his country seat, turns old Greek history into one pictorial philippic against the nascent democracy of his native land. This, in turn, stirs up the Lombard Street M.P., the plodding and persistent Grote, to try his hand at a History of Greece from the view-point of a modern English Liberal. Thus the simple-minded earnest student is

reduced to the perplexing task of striking a rough average between two one-sided statements. But this is very far from the Divine idea of writing history. To anyone who gets up such a case and labels it as "History," the single-minded student may well remonstrate as did the bewildered patriarch with his dramatising friend: "How hast thou counselled him that hath no wisdom? and how hast thou *plentifully declared the thing as it is?*" (Job xxx. 3.) Yes, that is the true function of all honest, serviceable history, to "*plentifully declare the thing as it is.*"

It is objected again, "These discussions may include matter which might impinge on the susceptibilities of very worthy people." But, on the other hand, should there not be, in the interests of history and of posterity, some *Statute of Limitation* to such restrictions on the freedom and impartiality of authenticated testimony? Surely forty-seven years after the very latest of the recorded discussions is an ample interval to satisfy all the reasonable requirements of sentiment and feeling. What a loss to English history if from 1826 to 1850 "Hansard" were a sealed book!

The self-same objectors, with more persistence than consistency, then take up the directly opposite position. They say these Journals should have been made public, if at all, whilst individuals were yet alive who might have shown the various speeches to be capable of a different significance from that which they seem naturally to bear. Thus history is effectually deprived of its legitimate materials, and posterity is wronged of its inestimable heritage of information and instruction! First, you must not publish while certain individuals are living: for that might hurt their feelings; then you must not publish after they are gone, for possibly they might have supplied a different meaning from that which the words are ordinarily taken to convey.

But the man who would be most aggrieved and injured by the suppression of these speeches would be the orator who made them. It was his almost continuous complaint, and that of his devoted followers, that he was of all men the most misrepresented and the most misconceived. What is the remedy for this injustice? Surely to let him *represent himself*. He was one of the greatest speakers of the time. *Let him speak for himself*—no one else can do it half so well. If Dr. Bunting's policy has been misunderstood and wilfully or blunderingly

misstated, who is the best man to set the matter right? Who but the mighty man himself? His speeches, now for the first time published, give the most explicit and emphatic statement of his real Church principles and of his working hypothesis as a great ecclesiastical statesman. The suppression of Dr. Bunting's speeches in the Conference would be a wanton waste; for the debates in Conference consist mainly of his epigrammatic and incisive utterances. A rich anthology of *Buntingiana* might be collected from these records.

Once more, it is suggested by those who misdoubt the value of these records that they were not taken by the expert and accurate reporter with a view to publication. To this I confidently answer: They were intended for whatever useful purpose they might serve—to rescue from oblivion conversations of enduring value and of sterling interest. At the close of Mr. Fowler's Memoir in the *Wesleyan Methodist Magazine* the existence of these invaluable documents was stated, and the expectation raised that they would in due time be presented to the public. That both Dr. Bunting and his filial biographer assumed that these precious papers would be some day utilised, and not consigned to mice and mildew, I know from their own lips. The former, in a large London Committee, spoke of their publication as a matter to be taken for granted. He said: "When Mr. Fowler's Conference Journals shall come out," etc.; and at a Pre-Conference Committee of Review, when Mr. T. P. Bunting was asked how soon we might expect the second volume of his father's life, he answered, "When Mr. Fowler's Conference Journals come to light."

The entire trustworthiness of these most interesting annals cannot be questioned; they were obviously taken at the time and on the spot. If a man becomes inaudible the fact is noted. And Mr. Fowler was an expert at reporting. He, if any man, could wield "the pen of a ready writer." His organs and his faculties were alike quick, clear, sensitive, alert. Mr. Everett, in his picture of him in the "Wesleyan Centenary Takings," chose as his characteristic text, "The hearing ear and the seeing eye, the Lord hath made even both of them" (Prov. xx. 12). *Swift-sure* would have been his most descriptive designation. Mr. Fowler's intentness on his journalism, and the fact that it was done upon the spot, together with his gracious self-suppression, accounts for the comparative infrequency of his

speaking, and the fact that even when he did speak his words were unrecorded. But he took a very important initiative in some memorable discussions; for instance, in the successful movement for ordination by imposition of hands, and in the starting of the remarkably successful effort for the diminution of chapel debts, two millions and a half of debt being since discharged.

Mr. T. P. Bunting, during the preparation of his father's life, spent a week at Sir Henry Fowler's house for the purpose of consulting these Journals; but the inexorable restrictions involved in the compression of the incidents of so many most eventful years into so few pages left scant room for Conference discussions.

I must surely have as much right, and I am as much bound, to defend an honoured Superintendent and intimate friend from unjust aspersions as anyone could have to cast upon him these aspersions.

The aim of every honest writer of history is to meet the ardent wish of every earnest reader, the wish expressed by Daniel: "Then I would know the *truth*, of that horn that hath eyes, and a mouth speaking great things, whose look was more stout than his fellows." To those who would have even Church history handled in the interests of some present-day party or project, I would administer the rebuke administered by the now reigning Pope to one who bitterly complained to him that a Catholic should make public so many things which had better not be known, as are to be found in a recent "Life": "In history the first and great thing is the truth, even though it be about a Pope." I have striven throughout this writing to maintain the spirit which 'nought extenuates and sets down nought in malice.' If I have failed, it has been from infirmity, but not intention.

## CHAPTER II.

### THE REV. JOSEPH FOWLER.

"I have long deeply and religiously loved Joseph Fowler, and conceived of him as of one of the princes of the Wesleyan pastorate, both in the pulpit and out."—REV. W. M. BUNTING, *Wesleyan Methodist Magazine*, 1852, p. 243.

THE Rev. Joseph Fowler was for many years a representative man in the Wesleyan Methodist Conference and the Connexional Committees, and he was a model of a Wesleyan Methodist Circuit Minister. Born at Bradford, Yorkshire, in the year 1791, he retained through all the changes of his life the strongly marked characteristics of the genuine Yorkshireman. He was shrewd, frank, self-reliant, and outspoken, warm-hearted, practical, appreciative, and wide-awake. In manner he was sometimes bluff, and on occasion brusque, but in catholic appreciativeness, in helpful sympathy and in high-toned honour, and in all the fealties of friendship, he was as good as gold and as true as steel.

The Bradford of young Fowler's time was, in respect of population, architecture, and extent, a much less imposing centre than it is to-day. Since that time its population has increased tenfold and more. Its palatial streets and public buildings were, as yet, undreamt of. The gaunt old weather-beaten parish church stood solitary sentry over a cluster of unpretending houses, shops, and mills, the whole expanse of which could be commanded at one eye-sweep from its bare churchyard. A quarter of a century later, from whatever point you entered it, if you walked straight on, you were out of it full soon. Where now the parks expand were at that time either leafy lanes or wind-swept, stone-fenced fields. But the commercial, social, and religious virtues on which its prosperity is founded were already in full force. Even then it had won a high reputation among the marts and manufacturing hives of Yorkshire for the vigour, promptitude, and

shrewdness which held sway in its well-thronged Piece-hall and its old Exchange.

Mr. Fowler was, in the best respects, a genuine Bradford man. He had all the quickness, the activity, the readiness, the regularity, the calculableness, the assiduity, which have been the commercial making of the town.

Even at that early time Methodism had a mighty grip of Bradford. With the exception of the Baptists, three diverse forms of Methodism had possession of the worshipping and professing population of the place. The Vicar, the venerable Mr. Crosse, was himself a veritable Methodist, the friend and kindred spirit of John Wesley, Fletcher, and Grimshawe. Wesley preached repeatedly in the parish church, and Crosse changed vicarages with Fletcher for some successive months. He would have none but Methodist curates; such as the devoted Mr. Morgan, Charlotte Brontë's uncle. Thus the Church folks were Methodist Churchfolk: conversely, the Methodists returned the compliment, and were just Church Methodists. No Methodist services were held in church hours, and the Methodist societies took the sacrament at the parish church. Three or four services on the Sunday were not too much for the devotional and homiletic appetite and the spiritual alimentiveness of the Bradford Methodists at the beginning of the century. This accommodating state of things subsisted till the year 1811, in which Mr. Fowler was called into the ministry. On the building of the capacious Kirkgate Chapel, in what was then the main street, the Methodists decided that they should have the sacraments administered in their own sanctuaries by their own ministers.

The Bradford Independents also were at that time Methodists in doctrine, though Congregational in polity.

Mr. Fowler received his first deep religious convictions under the ministry of the Vicar, Mr. Crosse. Thus the substructure of his character was laid in regular and solid blocks, according to the plan and plumb-line of Anglican Evangelicism. The effect of this was noteworthy in his ministerial life, in his love of order and decorum and solemnity and seemliness in public worship, and his invincible dislike of late-coming, slovenliness, and irreverence in any form. To him a clattering and distracting mode of entering a place of worship, or a slovenly, indecorous joining in the conducting of the service, was offensive to the last degree. "Keep thy foot when thou comest into the House of

God," was graven on the entablature of the sanctuary. One of his most frequent characteristic petitions was: "Look upon Zion, *the city of our solemnities*; may our eyes behold Jerusalem a quiet habitation, a tabernacle that shall not be taken down."

A wonderful Methodist revival took place in Bradford during Mr. Fowler's youth—a popular rush into the Kingdom of God, but he was not borne in by the pressure of the multitude. He joined the church when it was in its steady, normal state of planting, watering, and ingathering. This was in keeping with his temperament and mental habitude. Though an admirer of the genuine revivalism, and the ministry of Benson, Bramwell, and Bunting in his mightiest moods, yet he placed more confidence in a sustained and continuous ministerial efficiency and the regularly repeated strokes of battering-ram, than in extraordinary appliances and agencies. He was an admirable yokefellow with a revivalist like Robert Young; he knew how to pick up those whom his colleague had brought down, and to fold and tend the home-brought wanderers.

Young Fowler was soon impressed into the service as a local preacher, and the scholarly, sagacious Superintendent, Joseph Sutcliffe, was not slow in noting the Divine designation to the ministry of the Word enstamped upon the character and gifts of the retiring, self-depreciating youth.

Mr. Fowler's first appointment was recognised by him throughout his ministerial life as made beneath Divine direction. It was to Kettering, then at once a stronghold and a pleasaunce of the Evangelical revival. The secluded little woodland town was favoured with the ministrations of two of the greatest Nonconformist preachers of the time—Andrew Fuller and Thomas Toller. Fuller's name belongs to Church History as the originator of the great Evangelical missionary movement of modern times by founding, in 1792, the Baptist Missionary Society. He was a great man, worthy to take rank among the leaders of the Church Universal. His sermons were replete with wisdom, and with solid, striking, fresh, and individual thought, and were marked by a tenderness of treatment most notable in an intellect so sturdy and robust. Like some of the greatest Methodist preachers—Bradburn, Dixon, and George Steward—his weeknight sermons were quite equal to his greatest efforts on the most exacting occasions. Young Fowler never lost a chance of hearing him, and he loved to tell of the homeliness of Fuller's manner in dispensing his wholesome, yet

most tasty teaching. He had acquired an easy, artless English, which makes his "Gospel its own Witness," a sterling Christian classic. He was a masterly expounder of Scripture narrative and character, as may be seen in his handling of the history of Joseph in his comment on the Book of Genesis. It was in hearing him that Mr. Fowler first became aware that this was his own especial gift of grace.

Toller's preaching showed a richer culture and a wider range of reading. For fifty years he catered sumptuously for a large congregation, changed only by transplantations to the heavenly Eden, and by fair upgrowing of the children of his people, and by new intakes from the outfield of the world around.

The simple dignity or dignified simplicity of these pre-eminent Dissenting ministers cast a potent charm upon young Fowler's mind, and left a life-long impression upon his own preaching and his pastoral principles and habits. For, noble preachers as they were, they did not satisfy themselves with preaching to their people, but followed it up by assiduous pastoral visitation.

After two years at Kettering, Mr. Fowler's next appointment was to Banbury, which then included the Kineton Circuit, and took up all the ground between the Coventry and Oxford Circuits. After this appointment a filial yearning induced him to desire a station nearer to his widowed mother. This commendable wish was granted. He was stationed at Pontefract, where he laboured for three most pleasant and productive years. He was greatly favoured in his early Superintendents. His first, Thomas Dowty, was a serviceable, kindly, cheerful brother, who took a hearty interest in his people and his work; stout-hearted, brave, and buoyant, so as to make one think that the original orthography of his name was Doughty. His Superintendent during the greater part of his term at Pontefract was still more capable and prominent. *Robert Pilter* ranked already amongst the notabilities of Methodism. In his foregoing circuit, Leeds, along with George Morley and Jabez Bunting, he had taken a large share in the formation of the Wesleyan Methodist Missionary Society. He was a most earnest, tender, and effective preacher, and overflowed with sympathy, benevolence, and humour.

Whilst in this circuit, Mr. Fowler became well known to and well acquainted with a number of our ablest men, who at that time were thick upon the ground in the Leeds District, of which Pontefract was part: Leeds itself was an adjoining circuit, and



there, during this period, were stationed such magnates as Jabez Bunting, Walter Griffith, John Stephens, Jacob Stanley, David McNicoll, and Edward Hare. In another contiguous circuit were Robert Newton, Thomas Jackson, and Thomas Stanley. The impression produced on Dr. Bunting by what he saw of Mr. Fowler may be gathered from the fact that when he was requested by his friends at Halifax to recommend the most suitable minister for their circuit he suggested "Mr. Fowler, now at Pontefract." Mr. Fowler was accordingly invited and appointed.

His next circuit after Halifax was Huddersfield, where both his colleagues were men of rare mark and worth. The Superintendent, Cleland Kirkpatrick, had lost an arm in the engagement with Paul Jones the pirate, and in his roving youth he had cultivated the strange natural gift of ventriloquism. He sometimes entertained the social circle by the exercise of this weird, amusing power, but it does not seem to have occurred to him to turn his gift into an evangelistic appliance, or even as a congregation-drawing expedient on missionary platforms. "Pleasant Sunday Afternoons" were not yet in fashion, or this Rev. Valentine Vox would have been in wonderful request. To a professional like Caughey, it would have been an endowment of incalculable worth. But Kirkpatrick's ghostly mantle did not fall upon any of his younger brethren. Mr. Fowler's other colleague, John Story, was famous as a preacher for subduing pathos and overawing unction.

Mr. Fowler, who had been early left a widower, married Miss Bentley, the daughter of the principal Methodist in Huddersfield, but after a year of happiness he was again bereaved. One of her sisters was subsequently married to the Rev. W. M. Bunting, and another to the Rev. J. C. Leppington.

Having fulfilled his course at Huddersfield Mr. Fowler moved to Chester, and thence to Manchester (Oldham Street), having for his colleagues no less mighty orators than Theophilus Lessey, John Anderson, and "Captain Hawtrey," brother of Dr. Hawtrey, Head Master of Eton. These "three mighties" were then in all their glory, and afterwards came George Marsden and Robert Wood.

From 1826 to 1829 Mr. Fowler was stationed at Birmingham. His youngest colleague during the two later years, the Rev. S. D. Waddy, has borne, in his personal recollections, a high testimony to Mr. Fowler's character and usefulness at this period of his

ministry. He records that Scripture narratives were the staple subjects of Mr. Fowler's preaching.

Mr. Fowler's next circuit was Sunderland (1829-31) as Superintendent. From Sunderland he came to Leeds (Brunswick) at a very critical time in the religious history of that town (1832-5). The Anglo-Catholic Revival was putting forth the utmost strength of its Herculean infancy to strangle what it regarded as the dragon of Dissent; and it was part of its deep-laid policy to get possession of the strongholds of Nonconformity, by placing there the most energetic leaders of their party whenever incumbencies fell vacant. They had their eye especially on Leeds, the vicarage of which was soon to be at their disposal, and they shrewdly saw in it a grand strategical position, like some lofty fortress which commands a mountain-pass. The Congregationalists, on their part, were not at all remiss. They resolved on building two new chapels, much larger than any they possessed already, and on bringing into Leeds one of the strongest men of their community, John Ely, a most captivating and commanding orator.

It was obviously of great importance that Methodism should have a strong appointment at its central chapels, Brunswick and the mother chapel, the Old Chapel, or the Boggard House. And this assuredly it had in John Anderson, Joseph Fowler, and Francis A. West. And "their labour was not in vain in the Lord," although the after-swell of the tempest of 1828-29 had not yet quite subsided, and the thousand dissidents had organised themselves into an active community in 1833.

Mr. Anderson's time having expired, Mr. Fowler took the Superintendency and Mr. Young came as second minister. The Leeds East then included what is now comprised in St. Peter's Circuit and many populous villages and neighbourhoods.

The venerable Old Chapel being crowded out, a large new chapel in that thickly-peopled portion of the town seemed absolutely necessary. Yet two points were clear: First, the old mother chapel was so endeared to the Society and congregation that nothing could induce them to swarm into a larger building; and secondly, they could not bear any increase to its throttling chapel-debts.

I can bear testimony to the fact that the opening of this enormous sanctuary in nowise depleted either the Brunswick Chapel or the Boggard House. I spent the Christmas holidays of 1834 in Leeds. The Sunday morning congregation at Brunswick

was simply magnificent ; the Sunday evening crowded out. The old chapel was in like manner packed, although the new one was so near that the two congregations could hear each other's singing. At Brunswick the congregation was a sight to bless one's eyes with, such promise did it give of permanent prosperity. When Mr. Fowler moved to Bristol in 1835 he left his circuit in superb condition.

At Bristol Mr. Fowler had as his second in command, an altogether kindred spirit, the eloquent John Lomas, with whom he formed a life-long friendship ; when Mr. Lomas's three years expired he was succeeded by the great revivalist John Smith (3), second only to the first John Smith as a successful soul-winner. Mr. Fowler's next appointment was to Hull, with Richard Reece for Superintendent. Here, too, he—

" Worthy proved to see  
God's saints in full prosperity."

Mr. S. R. Hall, who was the young minister during Mr. Fowler's second year in Hull, describes the swarming congregations and the lively, prosperous condition of the work of God. He says that sometimes on a Sunday evening three thousand people would be crowded into Waltham Street Chapel. Amongst the trophies of his own ministry in that noble sanctuary was William Morley Punshon.

Mr. Fowler's next appointment was Newcastle-upon-Tyne, with George Steward as his colleague. Thus originated another of Mr. Fowler's dearest friendships. At this time began the architectural stateliness of the Newcastle of to-day, called into existence by the genius and energy of the Methodist Mr. Grainger. Beside the town of fisherfolk and colliers and their masters, and of narrow streets with unpretending shops, sprung up, as by the wave of an enchanter's wand, one of the finest cities in England.

I remember Grainger well, as a most active, energetic, and withal most pleasing personality ; a Nebuchadnezzar of a builder, he was remarkably approachable and affable. It was felt that it was time for Newcastle to be a Conference town, and it fell to Mr. Fowler's lot, as Superintendent of the chapel where the Conference of 1840 must be held, to take the lead.

Mr. Fowler's next appointment was to the Second London (Great Queen Street), with his dear friend William M. Bunting as his colleague, and after that his beloved old Leeds colleague, the noble preacher William Barton. I have elsewhere described

Great Queen Street as it was in the third year of Mr. Fowler's Superintendency, when I had the inestimable honour and advantage of serving under him as a son in the Gospel. It seemed to me then, as it still seems, as nearly an ideal Methodism as I can well imagine.

On completing his term in the Second London in 1845, Mr. Fowler returned to Hull as Superintendent of Hull West. Here I joined him in 1847. In 1848 the first Hull Conference took place, Mr. Fowler being elected Secretary. In 1848 he was stationed in London (City Road) as Superintendent, and as Chairman of the enormous district, which was at that time one and undivided. The circuit itself was very overgrown, and had then five ministers, including John Rattenbury and Alfred Barrett. During his term at City Road the St. John's Square and Jewin Street Chapels were built. Mr. Fowler died in the third year of his superintendency of this circuit.

I first saw Mr. Fowler in 1832, when he brought his eldest son, Robert, to Woodhouse Grove School. I was much struck with his appearance as he stood and took a long, silent, broad, observant view of the hundred boys and the five masters. This gave me the opportunity of making a careful observation of the observer himself. His tall figure was perfectly erect. He seemed rather spare, but vigorous and wiry. His square, forensic brow, with massive eyebrows, somewhat overshadowed his keen and searching eyes. He impressed me as grave, strict, earnest to the very verge of sternness and austerity. This impression deepened as I saw him on "Committee days."

And, on intimate acquaintance in the after years, I found the impression to be true, although these qualities were wonderfully softened, sweetened, and subdued by other characteristics. No doubt the basis of his character was seriousness and an indomitable serviceability. On no man's countenance and habits did I ever see more deeply stamped the strong, effective motto: "Life is *real*, life is *earnest*." He evidently felt: We are placed in this world to do and dare. His hypothesis of human nature was a working hypothesis. "I *must* work" was his supreme conviction. I know he carried this conviction to an incurable excess, till work became to him an absolute necessity, and a holiday a weariness. I might give many touching instances of this absorption in his work.

With this impression of the strong, grave minister, it was with tremor and misgiving that I approached the "Preacher's

house" adjoining the "Old Chapel," Leeds, where I had been directed to spend the night on my return to Woodhouse Grove from Belper after the vacation of 1833.

In those days it took eight hours by four-horse coach to do the sixty-four miles between my starting point and Leeds; eight miles an hour being reckoned then a splendid rate of travelling even with horses from Earl Fitzwilliam's stud. It had been a sweltering, almost sickening, day in the blazing midsummer, and nine continuous hours outside a coach was far worse in respect of nausea than a rough night passage in a steamer. For sea-sickness was a treat in comparison with coach-sickness on the close-packed back seat of the swinging, jolting, bumping Royal Mail. It had been Sheffield Cheese Fair and Worsborough Feast; both of them Saturnalia, which absolved from regularity guards and coachmen, at a date when people rather lived to drink than drank to live. So we were an hour late when we drove into the yard of the "Bull and Mouth," Briggate, Leeds. I had tasted neither bite nor sup since I choked down the very "humble pie" of a supernumerary's luncheon, and then hauled my luggage three uphill Derbyshire miles to catch the coach at its nearest stopping place.

I was a squeamish, home-fond little lad, twelve years of age; and as with aching head and heart, and with lean, cramped shanks, I let myself down from the coach, I secured the services of a porter to take me and my belongings to the Old Chapel Preacher's house, and to my dismay found it all dark and silent. The family had evidently gone to bed, as there was neither light nor sound. After vigorously knocking, however, a voice was heard from an upper window demanding the cause of this untimely disquieting. I explained the situation as briefly as I could. The reply was addressed to the porter: "Take this young gentleman to the 'Bull and Mouth,' and give Mr. Fowler's respects to Mr. Masterman (the landlord), and ask him to give my little friend a good supper and a comfortable bedroom, and I will come to fetch him in the morning." As mine host of the "Bull and Mouth" was a Brunswick pewholder, I was attended to with the utmost care and kindness. I found it well with me "both for bed and board."

The next morning I resolved to save Mr. Fowler trouble, and started early enough, I thought. But I only walked a few yards before I met him, radiant with kindness and

cheerfulness. His free and hearty manner put me at ease at once. At breakfast he treated me much more like an equal and coeval than a schoolboy. Had I been the scion of a noble house instead of a supernumerary's son I could not have been treated with more marked consideration and regard. Throughout the meal he kept me in continuous conversation—about my father and the Belper ministers, the state of Methodism in the town and circuit, my school work, and my voluntary reading. I had never met with anything like the same cordiality and, above all, *respect*, as I did from this grave, solemn-seeming man.

On bidding me good-bye he left in my hand a sum equal to a quarter's pocket-money, and insisted on my making his house my home as long as he remained at Leeds. In after years I found that this was but the ordinary habit of the man. With the exception of his early Superintendent, Robert Pilter, I never met a man whom I could bracket with him for taking an apparently instinctive pleasure in giving himself trouble to serve other people in trouble. The noblest of Newfoundlands could not with a more earnest spontaneity plunge into the water to bring to land a drowning man or child than that with which this man, so seeming stern, would commit himself to the case of a struggling, sinking fellow-creature.

And Mr. Fowler's kindness to the belated little Grove-lad was not ephemeral. He invited me to spend my Christmas holidays at his house. The second Christmas was a memorable time. The family had removed from the sombre Preacher's house, in the gravestone-paved burial-ground at the Boggard House Chapel, to the brighter Methodist rectory, over against the Brunswick Chapel. This was the greenest Christmas of my life. We had a houseful of delightful company. For Mrs. Fowler's mother (Mrs. Hartley, of Sunderland, the mother of Mr. James Hartley, the M.P. for Sunderland, and Mr. John Hartley, the great ironmaster of South Staffordshire), in all the sweet serenity of a saintly, honoured widowhood, a perfect picture of the ideal Methodist matron; and Mrs. Fowler's sister, Miss Louisa Hartley (afterwards Mrs. John Perks, of Wolverhampton), just as perfect a representative of a graceful, sunny, Methodist maidenhood, were also spending Christmas at the house. One genial evening gave me my initiation into another mystery of Mr. Fowler's varied character: his racy and redundant humour. His colleagues and their wives were bidden to a Christmas tea and

supper, and when, after tea, the ladies were withdrawn to enjoy their own communications, Mr. Fowler, with characteristic considerateness and kindness, asked me whether I should like to spend the evening with the ministers. This was to me a privilege, as unexpected as delightful. I grasped the privilege with eager gratitude. After a few rounds of sharp-shooting amongst "the grave and reverend seniors," the brethren, Young and Barton, began to press "the brotherly question" on their Superintendent, who was nothing loth to answer. He was most willing to communicate his hoards of reminiscences of Methodism at the end of the last century and the beginning of the present. He had the indispensable pre-requisites of effective tale-telling. He threw himself into his story with an *abandon* of enjoyment. He hit off the salient points, and left the listener to draw the moral. It was a kind of necromancy of narrative. One had but to say: Bring me up Bramwell, or John Barber, or Timothy Crowther, or other of the older worthies, and the old prophet stood before one.

With congenial colleagues the self-severe, hardworking man would unbend completely. And after supper was his "time to laugh" and his time to talk.

Another amiable feature in Mr. Fowler was his fondness for dumb creatures, and his interest in their ways and whims. He had a pet canary; towards the end of dinner time it would be let out of its cage, and wing its way to its favourite perch upon its master's chin, and peck the food from out its master's mouth. It was a very pretty sight.

The window of the room in which we held our ministers' meeting in Harpur Street, Bloomsbury, looked out upon some tall houses, which seemed to serve the sparrows of the neighbourhood as a kind of Stock Exchange. As our colleague was a most pre-occupied Secretary of Connexional Committees, he was allowed some minutes' grace in his attendance at the meeting. When that happened Mr. Fowler loved to recreate himself and me by speculating on the inscrutabilities of sparrow-life: as to whether, for example, they had any rule of procedure or discussion; what might be their politics and what their etiquette.

Mr. Fowler could be, upon occasion, the most resolute of men. "I like your Mr. Fowler," said Mr. Prest to me; "he can say 'No' better than any other man I ever met with." I once said, with regard to an attempt to secure a confab with

Mr. Fowler with a view to *talk him over* to some plausible plan which had no prospect of success : "If you try to negotiate that with Mr. Fowler, you will find yourself at the meeting place where Sanballat asked to meet Nehemiah : 'on the plain of O-no !'" His temperament was not sanguine, or like Peter's ; but rather sceptical, like that of Thomas. I have noted that a man's customary exclamation, when some wonderment is told him, often indicates his constitutional cast of mind and way of viewing things. If anyone brought to Mr. Fowler an item of intelligence stamped with extravagant unlikelihood, he instinctively met the announcement with a round, relentless "No." It greatly added to the interest of a missionary speech to be sitting opposite to Mr. Fowler on the platform. When a returned missionary was regaling a transported audience with travellers' wonders, Mr. Fowler would look at me across the platform with uplifted eyebrows, and wide-open eyes, and an audible suspiration on his circling lips ; and then, with a backward nod of dissent, turn round again to listen with the unmistakable inquiry on his face : "What next ?"

Of course, this was more than three-fourths fun, but it none the less bewrayed the innate scepticism of his keen and searching intellect. Yet there was an essential moral difference between this humble, earnest man and your self-inflated intellectualist, who assumes to represent "the most advanced minds of the age." Like young Hallam, he "*fought* his doubts" and did not fondle them, much less flout them in the face of other people.

Mr. Fowler's seeming snappishness was also obviously to me, for the most part, a strong and kind man's playfulness, like that of some shaggy, philanthropic, great St. Bernard, who in sheer affection might pretend to worry some playmate of a child. Who has not seen and heard a doting parent, who, having exhausted the vocabulary of fondness on his bewitching little child, finds himself compelled to borrow from invective such epithets as these : "You *bad* boy !"

At an evening party Mr. Fowler tried to start some highly-interesting and profitable discussion on questions with which he knew some members of the party to be conversant, and would thus put in pleasant requisition the mental stores of men like William Barton or Dr. Sandwith, or, as William Bunting phrased it, "uncork the bottled-up magnificence" of such a genius as George Steward, or the reminiscences of Thomas Stratten, the



great Dissenting minister, or the learning and intelligence of the eloquent John Lomas. It was as beautiful as it was refreshing and enriching to hear him quote the sayings of great preachers whose gifts were so contrasted with his own as those of John Lomas, and George Steward, and William Bramwell, and the eloquent Nonconformist, the elder Thorpe of Bristol.

No word could so fittingly describe the mannerism which by some was misinterpreted, than that chosen by the writer of the Obituary: "abruptness." And the explanation so given is most just, though somewhat incomplete. It resulted mainly, doubtless, from his constitutional quickness, alertness, wide-awakeness, and promptitude. It must be confessed that he found verbosity or expansive and obtrusive egotism, or wanton waste of time and words most difficult to bear. I have known him when in the Chair of a meeting, like Professor Sedgwick at the British Association, abruptly remind a wordy speaker that there were other men to follow. Of course the men whose very forte was verbiage did not quite appreciate such checks on their meanderings, but it comes well within the province of a chairman to economise the meeting's time and to protect the rights of the later speakers.

Mr. Fowler had, moreover, what was then in Yorkshire called "a scunner," an *instinctive antipathy* to everything which looked like uppishness or self-conceitedness in young and inexperienced men. He was apt to be very short and sometimes rather sharp with these "young pretenders" to authority. He could also be most biting satire on young people who appeared indifferent to their fleeting opportunities of self-improvement. On the other hand, he rejoiced over genuine excellence of any kind "as one that findeth great spoil." I cannot easily forget the warmth of admiration with which he would speak to me of Mr. Arthur, or the glowing estimation with which he exclaimed on first hearing a brief, brave speech from John James: "What an able man!"

The fact that such colleagues as John Lomas, W. M. Bunting, G. Steward, and Francis West, clung to Mr. Fowler throughout life with such loyalty of affection and respect was a conclusive refutation of the unworthy, pitiful detraction which was circulated by an over-eager faction to keep him out of the Presidential chair.

Mr. Fowler and Mr. West, "like kindred drops, blended into one." The self-manifestation of the former in his letters to the

latter is touching in its genuineness. It is an interesting fact that one letter refers to Dr. Bunting's engagement to Leeds (Brunswick) for the year 1833, which had been put in sorest peril by Dr. Bunting's nomination by the Missionary Committee as Richard Watson's successor at the Mission House. Dr. Bunting says: "I was honourably engaged to Leeds" ("Life," p. 641). But, of course, the exigencies of the Connexion took precedence of all provisional, local, and personal arrangements. But Leeds protested in a document signed by a large number of office-bearers. Mr. Fowler was commissioned to look after their case.

Mr. Fowler writes:

"I have seen Mr. Bunting, but can get little from him. Mr. Newton says: 'They cannot have Mr. Bunting; but any *disposable* man they might obtain. There has been a strong feeling on the question of President. I hear it whispered in the chapel-yard that the conservatives are disappointed. However, all are glad that the worthy R. Treffry is in the Chair. I have no doubt the Platform Brethren expected to see Mr. Grindrod in that situation.'"

The next letter refers to the opening of St. Peter's Chapel, Leeds, and describes the enormous crowds assembled simultaneously in the three chapels on the occasion, at St. Peter's, Brunswick, and the "Old Chapel." Of the St. Peter's congregation he says:

"I never saw so many human beings together before. Mr. Bunting's text was: 'I am not ashamed of the Gospel,' etc. It was an admirable discourse and a mighty unction attended it, particularly towards the close. So pointed, piercing, irresistible an application I have seldom heard. I was strongly reminded of Mr. Benson. Mr. Dixon's text was: 'Ye are come to Mount Zion,' etc. A first-rate sermon, just such a production as you would expect from a man who had studied to approve himself to God, a workman, etc. Many of the sentiments produced a most thrilling effect, and I think will never be forgotten. Mr. Lessey's was an eloquent discourse."

This is very characteristic of Mr. Fowler's generous and catholic appreciativeness: he rejoiced over a good sermon or speech, "as one that findeth great spoil." He adds:

"I was present the whole of the day of the seat-letting. At the close of a toilsome, but most pleasant day, to the astonishment of all, there were only nine sittings in that stupendous gallery untaken, and those would have been let but for the fact that they were quite *behind the preacher*. The seat-rents paid for the ensuing half year amounted to £220 17s. The proceeds of the Old Chapel (the overflow of which St. Peter's was constructed to accommodate) never exceeded £108, for the same period of time, and only once reached that sum."

Another characteristic letter is dated "Bristol, Sept. 29th,

1835." He thus apologises for not having spent a night at Mr. West's in Stockport, on his way back from Conference :

"The weariness of Conference, absence from home, etc., took such possession of my mind that I felt as if it were impracticable to come round by Manchester, though I well knew that a short sojourn under your friendly roof would have been a great relief in my wilderness of cares. I have entered on my new scene of labour with feelings similar to what I *usually endure* on a change of circuit, and though I have not been to every place on the plan, I have itinerated sufficiently to make very painful and depressing discoveries. Never in my whole course did I meet with a society 'so uniformly dead. This seems strange considering the character of last year's appointment, and for some time before. At our principal chapel we have a tolerable congregation in the evening. It has a debt of £2,500. We have two places in the country called chapels; but, alas! they are almost without congregations. We are minus eighty of the number of members printed in the Minutes. The division of the circuit was most unfair. But, more than enough on this unpleasant topic. My colleague Lomas is, you know, of first-rate talent, but not sufficiently appreciated. He is certainly held in great estimation, but not followed as he deserves. He is far too good a preacher to be popular in the ordinary sense. No. 3 is, I believe, nearly as high in the judgment of the people as in his own. But I remember your admonition, and I hope to profit by it. I am doing but poorly. My preaching is not perhaps altogether unacceptable; but there is not that *effect*, which I know to be indispensable. But, 'we are saved by hope.' I am quite out of the way of any Methodist news. I seldom or never hear the name of Dr. Warren mentioned, but I have discovered that several of our principal friends take the *Christian Advocate*."

In January, 1836, he writes on Connexional matters :

"I have heard nothing of the Committee appointed to revise our Rules. In corresponding with stewards about a circuit, 'Let your yea be yea and your nay nay.' I have bought Grimshaw's 'Cowper,' as the only complete edition, and am much charmed with his Correspondence. It is evident that the letters now introduced were excluded from former editions. They were too Whiggish and pious for Hayley and others. Have you seen Everett's 'Wallsend Miner'? Really I cannot find his claim to notoriety. I think that some of the sayings and sentiments of the biographer were in shocking taste. Can this be a specimen of the piety—certainly not of the intelligence, of Methodists in the North? Does not Mr. E. allow his imagination too much play?

"I am still repenting that I did not come to Stockport in August. I think I shall not commit the like fault again. I hope I may never receive from you a shorter letter than I have written. I wish you were within fifty miles. I would take a journey of half a day to talk with you on the subject of the two Editors, and the question of breaking, modifying, or rescinding our positive rule against any man remaining in any office for more than twelve years. No one who has lived fifteen years in London will be willing to leave it."

"Bristol, Mar. 8th, 1836.

"I have received an invitation to assist at the Missionary Services in

Birmingham. You know my unfitness for such occasions, and my reluctance to engage in them. However, on mature consideration, I thought I could practise no deception on a people with whom I had laboured three years. They ought to know what they are about. At all events we must so manage that we shall have one day together at least.

"I quite agree with you that Methodism should have nothing to do with politics. But the *Watchman* does not think so. The Government has strengthened itself much by its measure of municipal reform. I do not see why Methodists should wish it out. It has shown us great kindness in granting £3,000 to our West Indian Mission. The Wellington Administration would neither have proposed nor permitted any such a measure."

"Birmingham.

"I am decidedly opposed to the junction of the Chapel Fund and Education Collections. Our Second London Trustees intend memorializing Conference about it, and nothing that I can do shall be unattempted to preserve the Chapel Fund intact. I wonder that Mr. ——— consented to be put down as your Super., knowing that a remonstrance and probably a removal would follow."

I had no difficulty whatever in accounting for the partiality for Mr. Fowler which was so strongly manifested by refined and cultivated ladies like Mrs. Ince, the mother of the Regius Professor of Divinity at Oxford, and Mrs. Sandwith, mother of the heroic Dr. Humphrey Sandwith of Kars, and Mrs. George Steward. My own young wife, highly educated and accomplished, but shy and shrinking to a fault, regarded Mr. Fowler as one of the most charming of imaginable men. For a genuine *woman* will always recognise and render homage to a genuine man: to strength of character, resolution, independence, energy, and faithfulness. Moreover, there was in Mr. Fowler's bearing and address towards the other sex a kind of knightly courtesy and deference very pleasant to observe.

The first sermon I ever heard from Mr. Fowler surprised and struck me as much as did my first conversation with him. It was on, to me, a great occasion, the first Watchnight ever held in St. Peter's Chapel, Leeds, some three months after its erection. The building was well filled with a hearty, earnest congregation. As usual in those days, we began at nine, and had discourses from different speakers, relieved by lusty singing and impassioned prayer. At the Watchnights I had heretofore attended the prevailing tone was solemn, penitential, awe-inspiring. Mr. Fowler, on the other hand, gave to the whole service a characteristic festive, animating spirit. His text was: "Thou crownest the year with Thy goodness." He showed how the closing year had been dignified and decorated by Divine benignity, so that its

successive months had been like the sumptuous courses of a coronation banquet. He touched first on personal mercies, both commonplace and special, including consolation in the conflict of conscience, in commercial loss, in bereavement, or even in estrangement ; household mercies, social mercies, and above all Church mercies. He finished by showing that the capacious sanctuary in which they were then worshipping was itself a noble monument of the Divine beneficence ; since of God's own they had given Him, and it was of God's own unspeakable gift that they had been able to give after this sort.

It was a heavenward-lifting homily.

Mr. Fowler was followed by that ideal "fine old English gentleman," Mr. Gilyard Scarth, at that time, and for long, both before and after, the foremost Methodist in that great Methodist cathedral town. In stature and in countenance he was worthy to stand side by side with grand Joseph John Gurney. His text was : "Go to now, ye that say, To-day or to-morrow, we will go into such a city, and *continue there a year*, and buy and sell and get gain. Whereas ye know not what shall be on the morrow. For what is your life ? It is even as a vapour, that appeareth for a little time and then vanisheth away. For that ye ought to say : If the Lord will, we shall live and do this or that."

It showed the serious side of business life, and smartly, and in St. James's fashion, exposed the foolishness of self-confiding business speculation, and the tentativeness of all the best concerted plans of trade and commerce ; the precariousness alike of property and life, and the wisdom and the manliness of acknowledging God in all our ways, in the shop as well as in the sanctuary. It was an admirable commercial discourse, very striking as it sounded from the lips of a shrewd, successful Yorkshire manufacturer, to a vast midnight congregation in the heart of a great industrial centre.

It was all the more telling because it was utterly unconventional and unassumingly colloquial. It was the practical talk of a kind old neighbour to his fellow-townsmen. The "*Go to now*" tone of it was very marked. Though mighty little Greek he knew, yet his mother-wit taught him that the real rendering was "*Come now*," or, as Grimm translates : *to lead by laying hold of*. He took us each and all by the jacket, and said in effect, "If you only come to think, you know that this is so, as well as I can tell you."

To him succeeded Robert Young with his round, effective elocution.

It was a most cheering, animating vigil, reminding one of that passage : "Ye shall have a song as in the night when a holy solemnity is kept, and gladness of heart as when one goeth with a pipe to come to the mountain of the Lord." And, in after years, I found that Mr. Fowler's ordinary ministrations were of this hearty, heartening, helpful, hopeful kind. Their motto seemed to be : "Whatsoever things were written aforetime were written for our *learning*, that we, through patience and *comfort* of the Scriptures, might have *hope*." They seemed to breathe the spirit of the text : "*Thy statutes* are *my songs*, in the house of my pilgrimage." Beginning the week, after a Sunday under his ministry, one might well sing :

"Give me my scallop shell of *quiet*,  
My staff of *faith* to walk upon,  
My scrip of *joy*, immortal diet !  
My bottle of *salvation*,  
My gown of glory, *hope's* true gage,  
And thus I take my pilgrimage."

No minister I ever saw more closely answered to these lines : "Who then is that faithful and wise steward whom his Lord hath made ruler over his household to give them their portion of meat in due season? Blessed is that servant whom his Lord, when He cometh, shall find so doing." Assuredly that blessedness was his. For many years he was the great preacher of sacred biography and Scripture characters and narratives. He brought the truth home to men's businesses and bosoms, and gave both leaders and members something to talk of in their class-meetings. He, if any man, fulfilled the Apostolic charge : "Study to shew thyself approved unto God, a workman that needeth not to be ashamed, rightly dividing the word of truth."

The following letter to Mr. West is very illustrative of Mr. Fowler's character :

"Hull, Dec. 29, 1838.

"At our Quarterly Meeting I felt myself in a somewhat painful and perplexing situation, as my reply to the request to stay a third year must depend upon the division of the circuit, and my reply was asked before that business was brought on. I resolved to act, as I hope I ever shall do, a straightforward, honest, honourable part. So I said : 'If the resolution to divide the circuit be *pleasantly* and *harmoniously* carried out, I consent to stay ; if not, no consideration could induce me to remain.' The Superintendent rose and *stiffly* opposed the division of the circuit. His speech was heard in solemn

and expressive silence, but it was moved and seconded that the circuit should be divided. A dispassionate discussion followed—no clamour or excitement; the show of hands was in favour of division. The minority included two of the ministers. I took no part either by speech or vote, as was the case with others, out of respect to the feelings of the Superintendent. The day succeeding the meeting brought me invitations from two of my old circuits. I assure you it was a hard struggle to avoid saying 'Yes' to one or other of my old circuits. But I had rather suffer anything than depart in the slightest degree—or even appear to do so—from a strictly honest, honourable course. May I be divinely directed!"

"Hull, May 25, 1839.

"I know well that it is easy for you to write; and that it is very gratifying to receive and peruse what you have written.

"We have bought ground for a new chapel (Kingston), but no trustees can be appointed till the division of the circuit be settled.

"Our Connexion has been kept clear of politics; but I fear the proposal to agitate will involve us. The *Watchman* rejoiced at the downfall of the Ministry and regretted the failure of Sir Robert Peel; yet her Majesty's Government was supported in the Jamaica Bill by all the anti-slavery party."

It must be noted that Mr. Fowler was less a bringer-in or a breaker-down than a builder-up. He was acknowledged to be the pattern of pastoral visitation. "Publicly and *from house to house*" he taught and warned and cheered and fed. No one ever more assiduously fulfilled the pastoral injunction, according to the exquisite Dutch version: "Be diligent to know the *face* of thy sheep; *set thine heart upon the flock*." The immense success of Cyrus was accounted for by the fact of his personal acquaintance with and recognition of each private in his army. But all this means hard and honest labour, and to *know the face of thy sheep, thou must set thine heart upon the flock*. There used to be in my young days a soundingly cynical and caustic distinction between *pastoral* visitation and *pastural* visitation. Now *pastural* visitation may be and, so far as I know, has been a most important part of pastoral visitation. The family meal, when followed by family worship, forms a most endearing and often a most enduring bond between the pulpit and the family pew:

• How pleasant is the meeting  
With friends at close of day;  
The smiles, the fireside greeting,  
The tales that pass away,  
The kneeling down to pray!"

Village Methodism was built up at first to a very great extent by the institution of "taking in the preachers." But, in the

older time, this was taken advantage of as a facility for tender and affectionate conversation with individual members of the household as to their religious state and prospects. I have met with many who owed their early conversion to this kindly pastoral fidelity. Indeed, by a genial and judicious ministerial spirit, the "Dinner Plan" may be made no inconsiderable accessory to the Circuit Plan.

But Mr. Fowler made *systematic* household visitation an essential and most important part of his ministerial duty. His very conception of a Christian church seemed to lay upon him this necessity. He had learnt from Holy Scripture that the "flock of God," "the household of faith," should not be a loose and incidental aggregate of atoms; not a sandhill at the mercy of the passing gust. It should be a structure and an organism. And he saw and felt that this could in nowise be accomplished without plan, and purposeful, painstaking, and continuous and assiduous oversight. This minute and detailed oversight he gave.

This could only be done by one who took a real, deep, vital interest in the people of his charge. And his interest in them made this duty his delight.

Of course, such labour is impossible to the slothful or preoccupied: to the man who has "other irons in the fire" or is "busy hither and thither," scattering his ways in pursuit of social fads or socialistic reconstructions. No one can accomplish this unless he heed the Apostolic mandate: "Give thyself wholly to" thy own responsible, exacting, and engrossing work. Mr. Fowler would not lose the race by running after golden apples tossed temptingly athwart his course.

But did this labour pay? Did it prove by practical results that it was well laid out? Having enjoyed the inestimable advantage of being Mr. Fowler's colleague in two of the, at that time, finest circuits in the kingdom, I can testify "It did; a hundred-fold." Not indeed statistically. But did you ever stand on the top of the steep hill to the North of the Tay, near Perth, and look down upon the Carse of Gowrie? If you have, you know what is meant by Scotch farming. How the cared-for, cultured glebe, the clean and comely stretch of fertile soil, bears witness to the unspared labour and sagacity of its conscientious cultivators. After all "the Northern Farmer" might feel some honest satisfaction on his death-bed, when he could truly say: "*I done my duty boy the lond.*"



And such "a field which the Lord hath blessed" because it was a field by which man had "done his duty," was the Second London Circuit when Mr. Fowler left it two-and-fifty years ago ; and such was Hull (Waltham Street) when he left it the year before the devastating thunderstorm of 1849.

None I ever knew, but the great preacher and scholar Thomas Galland, and the Rev. Samuel Fiddian, could compare with Mr. Fowler in the establishment and cultivation of mutual recognition, and close personal relations between the pastor and his flock. Of course, this could not be done without a self-denial bordering on heroism ; and denial not only of ease and idiosyncrasies and hobbies, but also to a severe extent, of collateral interests, pursuits, preoccupations, publicities, ay, and even of secular and social undertakings of undeniable importance.

Mr. Fowler always felt that as a man is bound to be *just* before he is generous, to pay his own debts, and feed and educate his own children, before he indulges in expensive hospitalities and philanthropies, so no truly conscientious and enlightened minister of Christianity can postpone or slacken the spiritual oversight of his flock in order that he may be pushing forward the plans and projects of his party, or even prosecute biological investigations or critical conjecture and hypothesis.

Mr. Fowler did his interviewing in the homes of his people ; without distinction of gentle or simple, servant or mistress, cultured or untaught. To him the Christian ministry was "*the cure of souls*." He was a signal instance of the large and fruitful, and spiritually speaking, richly remunerative possibilities of home-visitation to a Methodist minister, who makes a conscience of it and acquires and cultivates a taste for it. For Mr. Fowler is in evidence that the taste may not only be acquired, but even nourished into a passion. Mr. Fowler's principle, to begin with, first for himself and then for his colleagues, was simply that of Richard Baxter in his "Reformed Pastor :—" "We must do the work to which the Lord has appointed us, whatever we leave undone."

It was to Mr. Fowler a mystery how a Christian pastor can go thrusting his ten fingers into ten different pies before breaking the crust of personal acquaintance with the spiritual condition of the members of his flock.

A serious increase of these labours resulted from the fact that the Stranger's Friend Society had its head-quarters at its birth-place, our chapel in Great Queen Street. Our circuit

included a large section of Central London, from Paternoster Row and St. Paul's Churchyard, to Piccadilly and the Haymarket, and from the Thames northward, to Northaw and Potter's Bar, with such thoroughfares as the Strand, Fleet Street, Holborn, Tottenham Court Road, Farringdon Street to the New Road, and the whole Bedford Estate, with its stately squares. It claimed along with this a great stretch of what may be termed intestinal London:

No one really knows the British capital who knows nothing or little of this immense systemless system of lanes, and courts, and "Buildings," and gruesome "Gardens" and "Paradises" which Eve might have left without a sigh. A most appropriate designation of these nests of parasitic life was "Rents," inasmuch as it betokened their primal purposes and their ultimate intention. It was a grim pleasntry of an enormously wealthy Duke of Bedford, who described the chief portion of his patrimony as "a few lodging houses in London."

Amongst the inestimable parts of my education in the real humanities which I owe to Mr. Fowler, is the initiation into this weird wonderland of hid-away humanity. Thomas Arnold breaks out into the apostrophe: "London! grand above all earthly grandeur, sublime with the sublimity of the mountains and the *sea*!" But little could that great and tender heart imagine how tragic was that sea-like sublimity of the capital of commerce and of civilisation and philanthropy. How often have I quoted to myself in plying my pastoral work amongst these dim and dingy refuges "where lonely want retires to die," what Mrs. Hemans says of Ocean:

"To thee the love of woman has gone down,  
Dark flow thy tides o'er manhood's noble brow,  
And youth's bright locks, and beauty's flowery crown."

The visitors of the Stranger's Friend Society were indefatigably devoted to the work, and never slunk or shrunk from duty, but the dying would often wish for a minister to pray with them. Thus the Queen Street ministers became conversant with such squalid settlements as Clare Market and Bedfordbury, being significantly called the Rookery, with Baldwin's Gardens, the since famous site of St. Alban's Church and the scene of Mr. Mackonochie's experiments and enterprises, and with the five-storied haunts in the crowded courts of Drury Lane, and with streets like Cursitor Street, which retain their

ancient names as the sanctuaries of vagabondism, and the close, unsightly coves in which collect the driftwood and the decomposing sea-weed of society. Our richest day school gathering ground was the region of St. Giles's and the Seven Dials, the Jews' quarter of Monmouth Street, and the adjacent slums.

Besides all this we had two chapels, Societies, and Sunday schools, in what might be called back-London, one in Harp Alley, serving as the meeting place for worship, fellowship, and child-teaching to the swarming humanity which lay huddled and hustled together between *Fetter Lane* on the West, and *Shoe Lane* on the East. That on Saffron Hill, approached from Holborn by Field Lane, was not the only district over which Charles Dickens threw the glamour of his genius, which lay within our pastoral beat. This will suffice to show that the sheep-walks over which this brave and faithful shepherd daily climbed were not all dewy downs, with tufted thyme and breezy outlook.

In the chair of a leaders' meeting, no one ever less forgot Dr. Bunting's admonition: "Act not as the mere chairman of a meeting, but as the pastor put in charge, etc.," than did Dr. Bunting's steadiest interrogator, Mr. Fowler. Nothing could be more *pastoral*, or more well-beseeming, than the gentle, quiet dignity with which he would preside over the proceedings of the sub-pastorate of a large Society. In Great Queen Street we had more than a thousand members represented in that one Leaders' meeting, and, including the four stewards, I have counted more than eighty office-bearers at one meeting. Nothing could be finer than Mr. Fowler's conduct of a delicate and difficult trial, or in the treatment of an emergent awkwardness. His self-control was absolute, and this rendered much more facile his absolute control of others. There was nothing fussy, nothing office-conscious, or self-conscious, but all was ministerial and paternal dignity, the "dignity of love."

In a *quarterly meeting* it was just the same. In quarterly meeting, or in district meeting, we never hove in sight of any hitch, with Mr. Fowler in the chair. As an administrator, as well as pastor, it can be truly said of him: "He fed them according to the integrity of his heart, and *guided* them by the skilfulness of his hands."

Mr. Fowler had a rare readiness of reply. A Local-preacher who had gone out with Mr. Eckett, after seven years' apprenticeship in that firm, had requested re-admission into the

Old Body. Before granting this request, Mr. Fowler required from him a promise that he would not renew his agitation, but either remain quietly, or leave quietly, if the spirit of dissatisfaction and unrest should once more claim possession of him. This undertaking he gave faithfully, but did not always bear in mind. Mr. Fowler, on his own part, felt bound in honour to check relapses into the old habit, for the sake of his successors. At a Local Preachers' Meeting the ex-Associationist broke out into a denunciation of some change in the order and form of business which had occurred during the period of his own parenthetical Associationism. He protested that things were not mismanaged this way when he joined the Methodist Society. On this Mr. Fowler quietly interjected: "Well, but, Mr. ———, you must remember that you have not been so very many years a Methodist, *this last time*." The litigious brother found himself, to use his favourite expression, without a *locus standi*.

Mr. Fowler's neat and prompt despatch of routine business left us leisure for instructive conversation; and he was wont to utilise the time thus gained by asking: "Has any brother, in his reading or his thinking, met with any doctrinal difficulty? Perhaps some other member of the meeting might be able to throw light upon it." Some most instructive conversations were thus initiated both in London and in Hull. Now, in Queen Street, we could boast of what was then a rare distinction, a Local-preacher with a well-won literary diploma. This brother most worthily filled the honourable post of librarian to one of the richest collections of books and MSS. in London. He was not in the least unappreciative of his own acquirements and distinctions, and in the course of his well-rounded life achieved no little reputation as a bibliographer. But his effectiveness in public speaking was materially discounted by a vixenish falsetto. His voice was on the true pitch for the cynicism and censoriousness which he evidently felt to be his forte. He cultivated and avowed an aggressive contempt for the worthiest workman in the Ministry of the Word who would stoop to receive his meat and hire, and for any one who preached the Gospel, and yet let himself down so far as to "live on the Gospel." In his theology, it was the muzzled ox alone who could with dignity or self-respect, tread out the corn. It was as good as a play to see him draw up his inches and stretch out his puny palms, and with a lofty look claim for himself the only apostolical succession by saying: "These hands have ministered to my necessities."

At a well-remembered Local Preachers' Meeting, this erudite librarian replied to Mr. Fowler's question as to doctrinal difficulties by an elaborately ready-made harangue, in an irritating tone, in the course of which he thus deposed: "Mr. Fowler, a friend of mine assures me that you have in several instances preached the same sermon twice in King's Cross Chapel." To this electric telegram Mr. Fowler answered, without a movement of the facial muscles, and in the tone of a man just propounding some nice point in theoretic casuistry: "Mr. ———, whether of the two should you think to be the worse man—he who *invents* a mischievous and silly untruth, or the man who loves it and lends himself to propagate it? The next time you indulge your appetite for fault-finding, you should fix on something that might possibly have happened." Mr. Fowler then showed how the habit of so many years of preaching-life shut out the credibility of such a story; inasmuch as he always carried in his coat pocket a little memorandum book containing the texts from which he had preached at every place in his circuit, with the dates of preaching. The big little man looked small as he faced the problem.

I never met with Mr. Fowler's match for the *neat and quick despatch* of business; the getting so much *clean* and thorough work accomplished in so short a time. I never knew a late meeting when he was in the chair. At the Hull May District Meeting (1848), although we had evening services, the whole business was completed in the most careful and satisfactory state in two days. It was noted that he read the Morning Liturgical Service in five minutes less time than any of his colleagues, and yet no man ever read it with more solemnity, feeling, and exactness. It was this alertness and expeditiousness which enabled him to do so much work and to do it all so well.

It might readily be thought that he took small interest in public matters, and was therefore more at leisure to mind his own business. On the contrary, he was decidedly one of the strongest public-spirited men I ever had to do with.

I had been but a short time in London with Mr. Fowler before I was made most pleasantly aware of his vivid interest in and minute acquaintance with both public men and public matters. In 1845 Sir Robert Peel resolved to reimpose the Income Tax, which he had brought out three years before as a temporary, or at least a tentative, expedient. He had also

declared his purpose to readjust the incidence of taxation to a sweeping and even startling extent. Hence his speech upon the Budget was looked forward to with vast excitement. Mr. Fowler kindly asked me whether I should like to hear it. Of course, I was but too eager for the privilege, having never yet been inside the House of Commons. He therefore obtained an order from Sir James Graham.

In order to secure a seat at all, we had to be upon the spot some hours before the Speaker took his seat. By degrees the House was crowded; and I found, to my astonishment, that my mentor knew the Commons off by heart, and had them *singulatim* at his fingers' ends. As they dropped in by twos and threes, he turned to me, with an eagerness of appreciative recognition, and told me all their names. It was a goodly sight to see the men of note from either side cross the floor and chat together with a chummy cordiality. I saw Sir Robert Inglis and John Bright, the wild Tory Colonel Sibthorp and the wild Radical Tom Duncombe, hob and nob together in the cosiest fashion.

A very characteristic observation dropped from Mr. Fowler's lips as the Chaplain of the House was moving backward out of the House, bowing to the Speaker all the time: "What a wonderful man that is," said Mr. Fowler. "Did you ever hear a man read like that before?" It was, indeed, the finest feat of fast reading I ever listened to. It was a marvel of celerity, clearness, and distinctness of articulation. He had read a couple of collects and the Lord's Prayer in an incredibly short time. Yet all was done in a tone and manner the most devout and decorous. It was also very edifying to note the perfect reverence of the members during this brief prayer-time, both in attitude and air.

Mr. Fowler showed the like familiarity with all the courts of law. To him no recreation could compete with listening to a stout debate or a well-conducted pleading and a sage decision in the Law Courts. If he felt jaded, or run down, or worried, he would say to me: "Let's go to Lincoln's Inn to hear the pleadings in such-and-such a case before Lord Lyndhurst, and what he has to say about them; or to Westminster Hall. There's sure to be some interesting cause on." He would tell me who was who, without fail or hesitation.

The advantage of all this to me was inestimable. It formed a most telling part of a *liberal* education. It was no mean

advantage in reading the debates in Parliament or the reports of Law Courts, to be able to call up the speakers, and to see them in their proper persons ; to hear the decisions from every judge upon the Bench, including men like Lyndhurst, Denman, Tyndal, Park, Alderson, and Coleridge. To see such men was worth a pilgrimage. The leading barristers too were well worth hearing or even seeing, such as Sir Charles Wetherall, Sergeant Wilde (Lord Truro), Thesiger, Talfourd, Pollock, and the rest. I thus heard some memorable pleadings, especially one before Chancellor Lyndhurst, in favour of the release of Cobbett's son from the Fleet Prison, where he had been confined for years.

On leaving the Second London Circuit Mr. Fowler resumed his pastorate in Hull. Here he enjoyed three more years of unstinted and successful labour. His second term was signalized by an event of great importance in the Methodistic history of that thriving port : its elevation into the rank of a Conference town. To his absorption in and his devotion to his work I can here, too, bear honest and admiring testimony, and also to its rich results.

As to Mr. Fowler's preaching during his consummating years of ministry, I can safely testify that it was as true of him in Hull as in the Second London ; he never in his life "preached with more freedom and feeling." *Freedom* and *feeling* were indeed amongst the chief characteristics of his strenuous ministry. No young Yorkshire preacher could put more soul into his sermons and his services than did Joseph Fowler, to the very last.

In 1848 his name stood first upon the Minutes of the Conference as Superintendent of the City Road Circuit, which then reached a high standard of prosperity and hopefulness. His *four* colleagues, were : Israel Holgate, John Rattenbury, Joseph Hargreaves, and Alfred Barrett—an admirable combination. The next year Dr. Jobson took the place of Mr. Rattenbury, and J. G. Wilson that of Mr. Barrett, with the addition of Mr. Fowler's successive assistants, Joseph Chapman and James Allen. Through his judicious administration, the large circuit, though not without explosive elements, was kept in peace and harmony.

Soon after the beginning of 1851 Mr. Fowler began to feel and show clear signs of bodily decline. The death-rate amongst ministers of mark since the preceding Conference had been unusually heavy, to which calamity our Connexional troubles had doubtless contributed in no small degree. First fell Leonard Posnett, a Revivalist all the year round ; a strong man in body,

mind, and spirit, whose sudden death was closely connected with the agitation in his circuit.

Next fell the Senior Editor, George Cubitt, then Jacob Stanley, sen., then William Atherton, and then Joseph Fowler. That the closing days of these most serviceable men were shortened as well as darkened by the harassment and havoc of our Church contentions, there can be little doubt. Atherton was so affected that he found himself unable to write to his old friend, Harrison of Wakefield, the notice of his expulsion, and was obliged to depute the duty to his second in command. And the Connexional devastation, even more than the consciously unmerited and the utterly unprovoked personal detractions and electioneering practices, told perceptibly upon Mr. Fowler's sensitive and high-toned nature. His constitutional reserve and reticence aggravated much more than it allayed the smart and throb of wounded sensibility and bespattered honour. His was not the light Greek nature which can let unmerited abuse drip heedlessly from off its oily plumage. He bore—

“A heart overcharged to express,  
He never complained, but his silence implied  
The composure of settled distress.”

I spent a morning with him in the City Road house some three weeks before his death. He was evidently not without premonition of his approaching end. The Master's footsteps were neither unlistened to nor unlistened for. He unbosomed himself to me with the most touching frankness. He told me that all his lifetime he had shrunk with even more than ordinary repugnance from the physical experience and the spiritual solemnity of dying; but he trusted that the Master's grace would be sufficient for him. He quoted with great feeling Bunyan's beautiful description of the death of *Standfast*, which forms the fitting close of his immortal work.

“Now there was a great calm at that time in the river, and he stood and talked to his companions, and said: ‘This river hath been a terror to many; yea, the thoughts of it have often frightened me; now, methinks I stand easy; my foot is fixed upon that on which the feet of the priests that bore the ark of the covenant stood while Israel went over this Jordan. The waters, indeed, are to the palate bitter, and to the stomach cold; yet the thoughts of what I am going to, and of the conduct that awaits for me on the other side, be as a glowing coal in my heart. My toilsome days are ended. I am going to see that Head that was crowned with thorns, and that face that was spit upon for *me*. His words did I use to gather for



my food, and for antidotes against my fainting. He has held me, and has kept me from mine iniquity. Take me, for I come unto Thee.' Then he ceased to be seen of them."

It was inexpressibly affecting to listen to the subdued and gentle cadences of the voice which had so often rung through our largest chapels in edifying exposition, or in manful, frank discussion; as he lay languid on the sofa, and in half-soliloquy rehearsed a favourite passage of the mighty theologian, who lay at rest within the eye-sweep of the window by the side of which I sat. It seemed like the tranquillising whisper of a strong but peaceful Jordan as it rippled through the valley. No one could deserve the name, or more fittingly receive the meed of Mr. Standfast than could Joseph Fowler; or that of "Mr. Honest," who also passed the river peacefully, "for he had spoken to one *Good-conscience* to meet him on the bank, and whose last words were: 'Grace reigns.'"

Mr. Fowler's wish and hope with regard to his decease were realised to the very full. His endeared and loving friend and former colleague, William Bunting, who witnessed it, gave an exquisite account of it in the Magazine. It was the kind of death which the true disciple most of all desiderates and prays for; that "by which he may glorify God"; and one by which, in passing, he may deal a blow at Death and impair the prestige of the King of Terrors for those who have to follow. It was a death of which the record may well "be for a memorial stone to the children of Israel for ever," a wave-smoothed mass carried forth from the dry bed of the reflux and awestruck Jordan, like those whereon "the priests' feet stood when its waters were cut off before the ark of the covenant of the Lord, until the people were clean passed over." It was a death to make one sing:

"Thine arm, Lord, is not shortened *now*,  
It wants not *now* its power to save:  
Still present with Thy people, Thou  
Bearest them through *Death's* disparted wave."

It was, moreover, a death which seemed in its very *naturalness* so supernatural. I never knew a dying which so seemed to strip the spectre of his weird unnaturalness. All the sharp, clear-cut individuality of a unique manhood was there, almost to the last struggling gasp, in the fullest force and with the freest play. The very piquancy and pungency of his sportive satire were with him to the close: enough to wake in the golden sickled reaper close at hand, that angelic laughter which Addison imagines.

Of course, like every other strong-built man, Mr. Fowler had the drawbacks of his talents and the weakness of his strength, but I never knew a case which so signally expounded the Spirit's saying through St. James, "Let patience have her perfect work, that ye may be *perfect* and entire, wanting nothing." With her sharp, artistic chisel, the sculptress Patience struck off and smoothed over all the asperities and angularities of a right noble character.

Mr. Fowler was promoted to the restful yet unresting service of the heavenly temple on March 17th, 1851, from the house in which Wesley died, and a few days after the sixtieth anniversary of Wesley's death. He lies in the truest "glory" amongst the sepulchres of our Methodistic kings, and his monumental tablet is to be seen to-day on the inner wall of Wesley's Chapel, hard by the pulpit where he had preached with the finest Methodistic fervour, the identic Gospel which the Wesleys had proclaimed both there and to gathered thousands on the commons and in the thoroughfares throughout the land. The honour fell to Mr. Steward of writing the inscription for his tablet.

His Obituary in the Minutes contains some felicitous and forceful touches.

I give an illustration of Mr. Fowler's absorption in his work. After our last Ministers' Meeting in Hull, before his removal to the First London and I to the Third, I stayed to tea with him as usual. When I rose to go, he said, "I'll walk with you." I answered, "But I am not going straight home. It is full moon and spring-tide, and the *Lion's* going out (the *Lion* was at that time the largest ship afloat with but two exceptions). I must not miss my last chance of that splendid spectacle." He said, "I'll go with you." When we reached the pier, he lifted his hands in astonishment and exclaimed, "I never thought that there was such a sight as this within ten minutes' walk of my own house. I don't remember having been upon the pier before, excepting to embark or land, or to meet friends or see them off." And this was wholly characteristic of the man's absorption in his work.

It must be confessed that he carried this absorption to excess. Through denying himself of holiday and change, in the interests of his circuit and Connexional work, his capacity for holiday-making became at last so atrophied and shrunken that when he was ordered to Brighton for change and rest he found himself unable to prolong his enjoyment of it beyond a very short time. The sentiment, "I dwell among mine own people," had become to him a kind of overmastering passion.

This presents a striking obverse to the experience of devoted men of an opposite designation and habit of life. To Dr. Newton, for example, incessant change became an almost tyrannous necessity, insomuch that he could not stay at home for many days in succession without experiencing a restlessness most distressing to himself and others. In Mr. Fowler's case the text "I must work" seemed cut into his very constitution as with the graving of a signet. He must work "as the duty of every day required." The nearest approach to a thorough rest I ever knew him to allow himself was but a short time before his death, when wishing to place himself under the treatment of his elder son, a very skilful medical practitioner in Leeds, he accepted the offer of his friends Mr. and Mrs. George Steward to place at his disposal a house of theirs at Chapel Town. Mr. Steward was then residing in the house near Brunswick Chapel. Mrs. Steward still delights to dwell upon the recollection of his cheerful patience under what proved to be his fatal illness—his "tenderness, affectionateness, and warmth of friendship."

Mr. Fowler's reading habits were of great use to a junior impecunious colleague. He always got the best new books which cast light upon the more recent history of religion in England. It was at his house that I read the then new "Life of Hannah More" and the complete edition of her poems; the "Life and Times of Selina, Countess of Huntingdon"; the "Life of Wilberforce," by his two sons. From his library I borrowed the then new "Life and Letters of Cowper" and the "Life of Arnold," by A. P. Stanley. His conversation on such works was instructive in a high degree.

His anxiety to leave a savour of Divine truth on the minds of those he visited was very marked and fruitful. In our evening parties, both in Hull and in London, he always took good care to quietly and gently turn the conversation into a profitable channel by adroitly starting some particular subject of interest.

In no more fitting place could Mr. Fowler have died than where Wesley died, and few more fitting men been laid to rest in the precincts of John Wesley's Chapel. For was he not a "helper" and "assistant" after Wesley's own ideal of a Christian minister? Did he not "watch over souls" as one that must "give account," to feed and guide the flock of God? Was he not fully qualified for this great work by "having *his work greatly at heart, by understanding and loving every branch of our discipline*"? Was he not "diligent"? As to fidelity to the

fifth Rule of a Helper I can safely testify: "Believe evil of no one unless fully proved. Put the best construction you can on everything. Tell everyone what you think wrong in him. Make all haste to cast the fire out of your bosom." It was this very outspokenness and free-spokenness that compelled him to ask those who were impatient of investigation and two-sidedness: "Am I become your enemy, because I have told you the truth?" And no one I ever knew came so closely up to the injunction: "*Be punctual. Do everything exactly at the time. . . . Spend and be spent in this work of saving souls. . . .*" A Methodist preacher is to observe everything great and small in the Methodist discipline; therefore you will need all the sense you have, and to have all your wits about you."

It will be seen from Mr. Fowler's most confidential unbosoming in his letters to his friend West, and the whole tone of his speeches and tenor of his conduct, that Mr. Fowler was a sensitive, high-minded Christian gentleman, the very soul of truthfulness and honour. He could truly say: "My rejoicing is this, the testimony of my conscience, that with simplicity and sincerity, not with fleshly wisdom, but by the grace of God, I have my conversation in the world, and more abundantly in the Church." He was pre-eminently a fair, both-sided man.

This translucent truthfulness and faithfulness of character and habit stamps with authority his Journals of the Conference discussions, and, in conjunction with Dr. Bunting's testimony, refutes and repels the utterly unfounded insinuation that Mr. Fowler's Journals are one-sided. Such a suspicion could never enter the mind of anyone who knew "the man and his communications," or had read the records as they stand. This book is not intended for anyone who sees in Church chronicles a feat of sinister suppression on the one hand and dexterous obtrusion on the other. It is dedicated to the truth-seeking student of the past.

In his strenuous effort to serve his generation by the will of God, he was wonderfully aided by his admirable wife. It was my privilege to live with them for six weeks before a suitable domicile could be found for me, and I came to regard her as the very model of true wifehood. If ever man was blessed with "a helpmeet for him" it was Joseph Fowler. She was at once his counterpart and his complement. His sober views of things were sometimes apt to deepen and darken into sombre views, and he had a constitutional tendency to undue reserve and

reticence and introspection. But Mrs. Fowler was blessed with a rare and gently buoyant *healthiness* alike of mind and temperament. Her whole nature seemed beautifully balanced. She exhaled a perennial cheeriness and quiet lightness, like the still and softened lustre of a well-trimmed, well-placed house-lamp, giving "light to all that are in the house." Her voice retained the musical modulation which can only be acquired by refined natives of the banks of Tyne or Wear. But no one ever less liked to hear herself talk than she did. It was only in a *tête-à-tête* that one could draw out her keenly observant, quick, and shrewd intelligence. She would on such occasions display an arch and inoffensive humour most frequently expressed in some sparkling Northern proverb. Yet "on her lips was the law of kindness."

The noiseless and the seemingly intuitive self-management of household matters gave a reposeful regularity to domestic sequences. Without fuss or friction, meals were on the table to the minute, and "the lamp went out" in comfortable sitting-room and cosy kitchen as if by clockwork literally. Yet there was not the slightest feeling of rigidity or relentless reign of law :—

" For all that smacked of 'noyance or unrest  
Was driven far from that delicious nest."

Mrs. Fowler's view of things was as clear and roseate as her complexion. And she could match her husband in considerateness and care for others. Her gentle mothering of myself when I was a poor, thin, pale, little motherless *Smike* of a Supernumerary's son, and of my dear young shrinking wife when I brought her as the bride of the young minister, can never be forgotten.

Mr. Fowler left four children, the eldest and the youngest daughters, and the two others sons. The elder daughter wore most gracefully "the ornament of a meek and quiet spirit." She had withal a strong, firm character, an individuality right well defined, with deep and warm affection and a thoughtful and unflagging earnestness. She became the wife of Mr. Witty, who held an important office in the Corporation of Hull. He was brother of the well-known Methodist Mayor of Hull, who brought such honour to his family and Church. The younger daughter's baptism I had the honour of attending. It was most impressively solemnised by the Rev. F. A. West. She grew up a lively and

most winsome sprite, yet a most exemplary and devoted Christian. She became the wife of the now lamented Rev. W. D. Tyack, some years after he had lost his former wife, the daughter of Dr. George Smith of Camborne. Alike in girlhood, in wifehood, and in widowhood she was a model of the Christian graces, and was one of those of whose character I can truly say, If this be not Christian perfection, I can form no idea of what it would be like when presented realistically in this work-a-day world. When I saw her last she was the crippled captive of acute though chronic rheumatism, and yet retained the sprightliness and unconquerable joyousness of the springtime of her life.

Mr. Fowler's elder son, Robert, was my schoolfellow at Woodhouse Grove. He inherited his father's reticence, sensitiveness, and constitutional reserve, and was one of those strong natures which develop slowly. He never liked the Grove ; its roughnesses were too strong a contrast to the amenities of his happy home. He was delicately formed, and gave small promise of robust, hardworking manhood. But he surprised both lads and masters by his daring expeditions in the dead of night. He was the hero of one of the nocturnal adventures in our schoolboy chronicles. But after leaving school he devoted himself to indomitable study, to prepare himself for the medical profession. He passed his examinations with distinction, and began practice in Leeds. But a few years later, being converted to God, by the instrumentality of my old friend, Benny Pollard, the great Lay Revivalist of Leeds, he felt constrained to devote himself to the Ministry. But at that time the enormous loss of members which followed the expulsion of the three ministers forbade the taking out any fresh candidates for the home work, so Robert Fowler offered himself to the Canadian Conference and was accepted. Here he preached and healed for the rest of his natural life.

What a contrast in the environment of the two brothers—in the setting of their labours ! The one a leading senator and statesman in the capital of the Empire, making for his name an honourable place in the history of that Empire ; while the other was administering to the settlers in far North-Western wilds the consolations of Christianity and the alleviations of science, and was their veritable "Medicine man" in a twofold sense. Yet each was serving faithfully his father's God, and "his own generation by the will of God."

In Mr. Fowler's more distinguished younger son, his father's

strong, fine qualities distinctly reappear. Their mental structure and their moral habitude were not at all dissimilar.

Mr. Fowler's intellect was of a distinctly legal cast—it was forensic and judicial, incisive, penetrant, and questioning, most keen alike in weighing evidence, in appreciating and discriminating data, and in detecting and exposing sophistry. Sir Henry Fowler also manifests his father's caution, and discretion, and surefootedness, and insight, and dominant determination to do the right and wise, the fit and safe; and the clear full vision, which is the exclusive property of the single eye. In studying Mr. Fowler's administrative methods and instincts, I was oft reminded of the passage: "I, wisdom, dwell with prudence." "Look before you leap" was with him a principle as well as a proverb. Wellington's life-long habit of trying to get to know "what was on the other side of the hill" was shared by Mr. Fowler.

Another marked characteristic, common to the Methodist minister and the Minister of State, shows the immeasurable distance between a lazy let-aloneism on the one hand—which imposes on the future the burdens of the present, and takes its ease at posterity's expense—and, on the other, a stolid, sullen, sulky rejection of a large instalment of a desired benefit because one cannot grasp the whole of it at once. How many public interests have been sorely backened and discredited through the over-eagerness of advocates for the triumph of their own ideas over those of the community! "The whole or nothing," these fanatics say; and so they go home hugging their nothing instead of housing their advantages. One of the sayings of John Wesley which found great favour with his fellow-labourers and followers was: "If we can't jump we must creep." Peace, with permanence and on a secure basis, as well as peace with honour and with honesty, is the true Fowlerian principle. Joseph Fowler acted on the prayer: "Let Thy *work* appear unto Thy servants, and Thy *glory* unto their *children*." Enable us to do our duty manfully, so that "glory may dwell in our land" long after we are gone.

Mr. Fowler was a thorough Liberal, a Liberal worthy of the name: a liberal Liberal. But he was no revolutionist, and the same is true of all the Liberals in the Methodist Conference with whom I had the honour of conversing or the privilege of hearing talk. Mr. Galland was the mouthpiece of them all when he said: "I dread extremes; but of the two I think a Radical *extreme* is worse even than a Conservative *extreme*." The

statesman with whom Mr. Fowler most commonly agreed was Lord John Russell. But he was a great admirer of Lord Morpeth (afterwards Earl of Carlisle). He held property which made him a voter for the West Riding, and he, with steadfast loyalty, supported Morpeth in his candidature for that grand constituency.

Another important particular in which Sir Henry, to use a Yorkshire phrase, "favours his father," is a hearty sense of humour, combined with its very marked suppression in counsel and in public speaking. A dash of genuine humour is a wondrous help in business, and it oils and cools the heated wheels of too impetuous debate, when friction might too soon become ignition. Hence it has been most mistakenly supposed that Sir Henry is defective in the sense of humour. In youth, at any rate, his humour was redundant and perennial.

It is remarkable that two young fellow-worshippers at Great Queen Street Chapel, London, during Mr. Fowler's Superintendency—the Right Hon. W. H. Smith and Sir Henry Fowler,—both rose to be members of the British Government. It is still more remarkable that although on opposite sides of the House, the public character and life of both were marked by features which commanded the respect and deference of both parties in the State ; of all intelligent, sound-hearted, loyal men throughout the Empire.

Nor is this hard to understand. They were both *British* to the core. They revealed the qualities which have made the British Empire, and which alone can keep it in its might and majesty : unfeigned, unfaltering faith in the great verities of Christianity ; a morality, both public and private, derived from and deeply rooted in the Holy Scripture ; sound, practical good sense ; fairmindedness and openmindedness, integrity and honour.

And these were not the only Methodist youths at that same time and place who have achieved distinction since, who were "nourished and brought up in sound doctrine." Among these were Dr. Ince, Regius Professor of Divinity at Oxford, and Dr. C. Radcliffe, the eminent physician ; the man who was called in to alleviate the dying throes of such opposite celebrities as Frederick Maurice and Cardinal Newman.

The last time I was at Dr. Radcliffe's house he had just returned from the death-bed of the latter, and whilst I was there an urgent message was sent from Huxley to come and counsel him as



to the significance of some biological phenomena which had just emerged within his cognizance. For Radcliffe had long been the fellow-labourer of Huxley, and had by a full decade gone before him in his eager explorations. Dr. Radcliffe had enjoyed a high training in physical and mental science both in France and in Germany as well as England, and so early as in 1850 had published the result of his investigations, in his "Proteus, or the Law of Nature." His object was to set forth "the Unity in the Forms of Organic Life," not only in an ideal, but also in a practical sense, the essential oneness of type, and "the ultimate conformity to a common archetypal element." He went so far as to postulate "*the potential existence of the same faculty*" in all animated organisms, and to attribute to arrested development much of the variation in animal forms and organs. This was a good step toward the sounder, saner part of the Darwinian hypothesis. He had already collected in Newman Street, Oxford Street, where he then lived, a most interesting museum of specimens and data in support of his hypothesis. He was preparing this book during the whole time of my ministry in Queen Street Chapel.

Mr. Green, the artist, also worshipped there during the same period. In the course of my last conversation with him in his own house, he told me that when, in 1844, he came up to London as a student in the Royal Academy, he fell among a set of smart young fellows who were freethinkers and correspondingly freelivers, that he was saved from making shipwreck of faith and of a good conscience by the ministrations at Great Queen Street Chapel, and the counsels he received at the Quarterly Visitation of his Class. Also there was squeezed in between his tall father and his tall aunt in a prominent pew a wideawake young gentleman of some eight years old, who has become famous as an educationist, a preacher and publisher of sermons, a most prolific writer and an adventurous exploiting critic, now known as the Rev. Dr. Abbott, Head Master of the City of London School. Along with another scion of our Methodism, W. G. Rushbrooke, he was the author of "The Common Traditions of the Synoptic Gospels."

It will be seen that the Rev. Joseph Fowler, so long regarded as the Standard Bearer, both in Conference and in Connexional Committee, of the party of freedom of speech, and *right of search*—in one word, the *Constitutional* party in Methodism—was a high-minded Christian gentleman and a most capable and

conscientious teacher of our doctrines and administrator of our discipline. And "they were all gallant knights and true."

The first of Mr. Fowler's principles was : freedom of speech, inquiry, discussion and animadversion in Conference and Connexional Committee, and the absolute equality of right to the use of this freedom on the part of every member both of Conference and Committee. A favourite quotation of his was, "The prophet that hath a dream, let him tell a dream, and he that hath My word, let him speak My word faithfully. What is the chaff to the wheat ? saith the Lord." His conviction was that every subject of importance should be sifted and ventilated thoroughly upon the summer threshing-floor of genial, frank, and free discussion, all the essential data being spread out fairly on a clear and level area, and winnowed by the breath of heaven till the wheat was thoroughly purged from chaff. And, surely, he was right. Every question has at least two sides ; to ascertain its merits and its bearings it must be sifted all round.

Another of Mr. Fowler's leading principles was embodied in a saying often quoted in discussion by a counsellor and statesman of a very different school. Mr. Prest would say : "I agree with Mr. Fowler. We should not be content with praying, 'Give peace in our time, O Lord,' but should add, 'and in our children's and grandchildren's time as well, until time shall be no more.'" Mr. Fowler held in dread, one might almost say in detestation, an inane and idle opportunism and expedience, which builds big chapels and leaves it to posterity to pay for them ; which shirks or shelves important matters and lets things go from bad to worse, beneath the indolent, ignoble policy of present peace, at any price of detriment and mischief to our poor successors.

It is now our duty to state conscientiously and clearly the significance of Mr. Fowler in the constitutional history of Methodism ; and in order to do this we must glance backward to the discussions and decisions which took place inevitably on the death of Wesley. These referred most naturally, first, to the relations of the preachers with each other ; second, the mutual relations of the pastors and the people ; and third, the relations of Methodism to the Established Church on the one hand, and the "Dissenters" on the other. On all these points there was sure to be "a distinction in the sound" of those who give the signal for the movements of the host ; both among the pastors and the people there necessarily ensued in a voluntary association, from

differences of individual temperament, antecedents, associations, education, reading, habits of thought, and varieties of taste and refinement. There were, of course, differences of judgment as to the changes in organisation, and the adjustment of authority rendered necessary by the death of Wesley. The first anxiety was to maintain liberty, fraternity, and equality among the ministers themselves. There was a wholesome dread of the formation of an oligarchy within the Conference itself, not altogether groundless, as was made clear by the secret conclave at Lichfield, which was broken up by the promptitude and pluck of Benson. On the four great questions above mentioned there was known to be a pronounced difference of view among the magnates: Bradburn, Hanby, Thomas Taylor, Pawson and others inclining to the more popular and independent view. But young Kilham's agitation, and his furtive and impatient mode of rushing on the changes upon which his heart was set, dealt "a heavy blow and sad discouragement" to that side of the house, and threw back their policy for three-quarters of a century. The wise and truly statesmanly and pastoral *Plan of Pacification and Leeds Regulations* in 1795-97, had produced, however, the most sedative and satisfactory results and were followed by twice seven years of matchless quiet and prosperity. Jabez Bunting entered the ministry two years after this, and full soon became a puissant Reformer, to use his own designation of himself. His immense and manifold ability and, above all, his intense spiritual force, and clear and firm theological convictions, soon gathered into and around his commanding personality predominating influence both in council and in camp. But, as we shall see, there arose up in Conference a number of high-principled, reflective men, who very often looked at matters from a somewhat different point of view from that which was, for the most part, taken by Dr. Bunting and his nearest friends. To this side of the house Mr. Fowler naturally gravitated, and at last became its leading representative. This gives to him a special importance and influence in the Constitutional history of Methodism.

The following sketch was written by me and published in the *Watchman* a week after Mr. Fowler's death:—

"The late Rev. Joseph Fowler, at about the age of seventeen, became partaker of the unfeigned faith which dwelt first in his sainted grandmother and then in his devoted mother. The anniversary of his conversion he set apart for holy commemoration to the

last year of his life. He preached his first sermon in 1810, and in the succeeding year entered the ministry under the auspices of the Rev. Joseph Sutcliffe. His first circuit was Kettering, an appointment which materially conduced to the formation of his pastoral character and his pulpit style. Kettering was at that time singularly favoured by the ministrations of two eminent Dissenting ministers, Thomas Toller and Andrew Fuller, whose intellectual portraits are drawn with such fond fidelity and Sallustian elegance by Robert Hall. Here Mr. Fowler was brought into contact with men whose well-won celebrity rested upon a broad pedestal of private worth, and whom the fascinations of a deserved popularity never seduced from the assiduous cultivation of their own ministerial enclosures. The peculiarities of Andrew Fuller, especially, being in accordance with Mr. Fowler's own idiosyncrasies, tended to determine his adoption of that sententious, pungent, expository style which characterised his ministrations from first to last. The frankness and the sensitive propriety of his own nature led him to assimilate to both those great ministers in that easy and natural, and yet, withal, grave and dignified bearing in the pulpit, which whilst it guards against everything unbefitting, yet gives freest play to individual peculiarities. Mr. Fowler's first appointment had the further effect of giving him a somewhat sharper and bolder type of Nonconformity, which, though never violent or aggressive, was yet marked and decided through the whole of his public life. His daily journal—commencing with his ministerial course and continued to the last Thursday of his life—reveals at once the regularity and laboriousness of his habits, and the fervour and energy of his piety. He was accustomed to rise at five, frequently at four, for purposes of study and devotion ; and, as the result of his faithful improvement of his talents, he soon took rank among his brethren, being stationed in circuits of the first class early in his course, and honourably maintaining his status until he finished his career as Superintendent of the London First Circuit.

“ Mr. Fowler's pulpit style was clear, concise, keen, strong, often piquant, sometimes caustic—the natural outbirth of his intellect—his prevailing gravity being ever and anon relieved by the sudden glancings of acute but delicate satire. At such times his shrewdness sharpened into smartness. He strongly defined the angles of a thought. He excelled in the application of Scripture incident to the Christian's daily walk, and always brought home truth to men's businesses and bosoms. He held

forth the Word of Life as a lamp unto the feet and a light unto the path. By nature he was intuitively skilled, and by observation profoundly versed in the philosophy of common life. But he possessed an immense advantage in the sympathy which his pastoral habits established between him and his regular hearers. Often would individuals perceive that the selection and treatment of his text had referred to their peculiar trials and perplexities. He concentrated his energies and solitudes upon the circuit in which Christ had placed him, going in and out amongst his people, ever gathering about himself affection and respect, and diffusing around him instruction and consolation. Soft was his footfall and gentle were his tones in the room of sickness. His words were as ointment poured forth. Everything but his public engagements was postponed to the visitation of the sick. In his last circuit, when high in Connexional office and responsibility, discharging the onerous duties of Superintendent of a London circuit and Chairman of the London district, he regularly spent three hours a day in this long-loved employment. His general reading was deliberately relinquished for this. The home of the bereaved family and the bedside of the sick and dying afforded, in his opinion, invaluable preparation for the pulpit. In circuit matters he displayed great ability and tact, and peculiar facility in the dispatch of business. He had a truly Wesleyan horror of late hours, yet business was never slurred, and his rare celerity was the natural product of promptitude, regularity, and skill. His characteristics as a leading member of the Conference and the multifarious important committees of Methodism are well known.

“In addition to an acute intellect and strong practical common-sense, he possessed the moral requisites of a good counsellor, independence, sincerity, love of truth, and a heartfelt interest in the subject of discussion. Believing Wesleyan Methodism superior to all other Churches as an exemplification of Apostolical doctrine and discipline, he took an almost sectarian interest in its prosperity and extension. He thoroughly loved Methodism, and would hold no fellowship with its enemies. He characterised the ‘Fly-sheet’ in 1848, in a document never intended for the public eye, as execrable, and deeply did he mourn over the melancholy results.

“Though shattered in body, he nerved himself to protect his beloved Methodism in his own circuit. And official records, as well as the unanimous opinion of his brethren, proclaim how

thoroughly and how well he did his duty. Nothing displeased him more than the mawkish sentimentality of characterising as 'good men' parties who fostered a system of lying and slander. Such conduct he always considered and described as 'immorality,' in the fullest sense of that word. The fragments of his last literary effort record, with no uncertain sound, his sentiments with regard to the Conference.

"But it was in the intimacies of private life that Mr. Fowler's character appeared in its happiest attitude and truest light. It was here that the nobility of his nature was revealed in its full proportions, confiding, fraternal, communicative, rich in reminiscences of departed worth, liberally endowed with conversational powers, yet much more bent upon drawing out the resources of others than parading his own. He loved contact with men whose mental structure differed from his own. Inaccessible to petty jealousies, he exulted in the discovery of excellence with the most genuine satisfaction. To those who had a superficial acquaintance with him, his mannerisms did him great injustice. There was at once a certain spasmodic abruptness of manner, and a grave and thoughtful reserve, which wore the semblance of moodiness; but that seemingly impenetrable exterior enclosed a gentle and an honest heart.

"He bore his long and peculiarly painful affliction with entire submission, testing and fully proving the solidity of the consolations he had so often addressed to others; and in the dark valley, comforted by the 'rod and staff' of his all-sufficient Saviour, he 'feared no evil.'

"In fine, among the many veterans who have this year received their discharge from the ranks of the Church Militant, not the least remarkable, not the least deserving, was Joseph Fowler."

### CHAPTER III.

#### THE LEEDS CASE AND ITS SEQUENCES.

OF the great Wesleyan Methodist Connexion of Churches, "the Conference" is known to be the central, guiding and controlling force. Its decisions are the "rules" for the ordering of the vast community. It naturally, one might say normally, gives tone and tendency to the widespread local fellowships that look to it for leading and for oversight. The materials for the inner history—which is, of course, the *vital* history of this great factor of the religious life of the United Kingdom—must be sought with special heedfulness in the *conferrings* of the Conference. The spiritual diagnosis of the Wesleyan Methodist body can in no wise be completed without a sensitive and wary finger upon this its most accessible and calculable pulse, an inspection of its tongue, and a listening to the chest-heaves and the heart-beats of its highly animated organism.

But for a stretch of years no report of the discussions of the British Conference was presented to the public. Of course, the Conference Journal was regularly kept, but that was a record of proceedings and decisions, not a diary of the debates, deliberations, interlocutions, inquiries, and replies of a great Church Council surveying from all sides and straining through successive sieves the complex practical problems and proposals of each current year. But about the year 1823, now seventy-five years ago, a young minister, Joseph Fowler, became so powerfully impressed with their incalculable value to history and as a heritage of future Methodism, that he resolved they should no longer run to waste. So he set himself to permanently fix the "wise saws and modern instances" of these honoured sages of our Church. They are still preserved and still available. They perform for us the wonders of the new photography, empowering us to see through the stone walls and the honest brickwork of the solid, quaint old sanctuaries, where the conclaves were assembled, and then put to our ear the telephone through which their deliberate

articulations and their solemn, earnest cadences still strike upon our ears.

To an eager and susceptible young minister the assembled Conference of 1827 must have presented an impressive and a stirring spectacle. It was held in Manchester; about three hundred ministers were present. Most of them were men whose faces bore the signature of a mental and a spiritual superiority enstamped by Nature, countersigned by Grace. Most of them were blest with a hale, elastic outer man, well developed in its growth and setting by healthy occupation; and the exhilaration and exposure of their pedestrian and equestrian evangelism had clarified their spirits and furbished up their faces till they seemed at once the most solid and the cheeriest of mortal men. "Hail fellow well met" was the meaning of the glance and grip of the Methodist preachers then as now; they moved with firm, elastic step through the precincts of a Conference Chapel. They were a brave and hardy brotherhood, well used to front the crowd, the snow-storm, or the thunder-storm. They were, moreover, shrewd men, well stocked with mother-wit—"men who could render a reason."

Though six-and-thirty years had passed since Wesley occupied the Chair of Conference, yet some of the elders who outlived "the Methodist Joshua" were still active, both in council and in camp. There was the venerable James Wood, grandfather of the late Mrs. Everett Green. He had for eighteen years served as a son in the Gospel with Wesley, had twice been President, and though in his seventy-seventh year his "glory was fresh in him, and his bow was renewed in his hand." There was Henry Moore, John Wesley's private secretary. The coeval of James Wood, he had, like him, twice occupied the presidential chair, and his sententious wisdom still enriched, as his grim sagacious humour still enlivened the deliberations of the pastorate. He was mettlesome and sturdy as an Irish horse, and was just as trusty and as good at need.

Then there was the far more famous Irishman, Dr. Adam Clarke, who ranked amongst the greatest scholars and savants in Christendom; yet ever far mightier with the voice than with the pen, a greater preacher than expositor by many bright degrees, and yet nobler still as a man of stainless honour and a faithful man of God. A member of almost all the learned societies in the United Kingdom, and the cherished guest of royal dukes; chosen by His Majesty's Commissioners of Public



Record, as the most competent man then living for the titanic task of editing the State papers of the Empire, and in the front rank of philanthropists and archæologists, he was yet as simple as a saint. He had been President three times.

Then there were the two distinguished Josephs : Joseph Entwisle and Joseph Sutcliffe—the two saintliest-looking men my eyes have ever rested on. Yet there was naught about them of the ascetic or the mystic, they were the very symbols of a comely, comfortable, sociable, serviceable sainthood. A placid animation and reposeful readiness for all the will of God was the clear expression of their countenances, and every feature seemed to say : "*To be spiritually-minded is life and peace.*" A deep and mellow lustre glowed upon their faces as of a calm autumnal eventide. They formed a fine illustration of Ecclesiastes viii. 1 : "Who is the wise man, and who knoweth the interpretation of a thing? A man's wisdom maketh his face to shine and the boldness of his countenance is transfigured." There, too, sat Richard Reece.

All these had worked with Wesley and knew the man and his communications, and many more had heard him preach and felt his hands of benediction on their heads.

But the most impressive figure of them all was that of Richard Watson, the stateliest intellect our Church has yet produced. Even in stature there were few to match him : he stood six feet two. Byron, in describing Mont Blanc, has photographed our Watson to the life—

"Simple, erect, august, austere, sublime."

He had, I think, the biggest brow I ever saw, and it was exquisitely modelled ; not cast like a cannon ball, in a mould that had been used before and might be used again, but as if elaborately modelled by a master workman's hand. For native dignity of carriage and of utterance, he was quite unrivalled ; yet his quiet talks to boys were in a subduing tenderness of tone which made his patriarchal counsels sink deep into the heart.

On the floor of the house the speakers were but few and far between. The principal debaters were Daniel Isaac and Valentine Ward, both very able men, whom, however, I have elsewhere described. All these famous men were powerful preachers, for no one could become a potent voice in Conference

who had not proved himself in the pulpit to be "an eloquent man and mighty in the Scriptures." All these notabilities, in my boyhood or young manhood, I looked up at with a reverential wonder as the "mighties" of our Methodism, and with the one exception of Dr. Adam Clarke, whose form and face I vividly remember, though his voice I never heard—I listened to their measured cadences as to authentic oracles.

But of those three hundred counsellors, the immensely preponderating personality was that of Jabez Bunting, though he had more than half his great career before him. He was then about forty-seven years old and had just completed the twenty-eighth of his ministry. And the explanation of this pre-eminence requires no critical clairvoyance to explain.

The year 1827 marks an epoch in the history of Methodism as that in which occurred the first of the divisions which devastated the Connexion during the middle quarter of the present century. This was the celebrated Leeds case, which arose out of the strong difference of opinion amongst the members of the large society in that great Methodist centre with regard to the introduction of an organ into its largest chapel. Up to the year 1820 trustees could obtain leave to venture on this, at that time, risky innovation, by direct application to the Conference. But it had turned out that, from insufficient information as to the state of local feeling on the matter, the Conference had prematurely consented to this change in the accessories of public worship, so that it had proved the cause of discord and dissension amongst the members of the Church.

From the Reformation downwards there had been a strong disposition, on both sides of the Tweed, to associate the organ with a performed and quasi-popish worship. This feeling was at first so strong that the fact of Queen Elizabeth having an organ in her private chapel was not only denounced by the Puritans, but also claimed by the Papists as proof positive that she was a Romanist at heart. So late as 1644, an Act had passed the House of *Lords* forbidding organs in any church within the realm. This feeling was far from extinct seventy years ago in Nonconformist circles. Hence, until the present generation there was no organ in the two great London chapels, City Road and Queen Street.

The Conference of 1820 passed the following law: "Organs may be allowed by special consent of the Conference, but *every*

*application shall be first made to the District Meeting, and if it obtain their sanction, shall then be referred to a Committee of the Conference, etc."*

Surely the natural and straightforward meaning of these words is: that the *sanction* of the District Meeting was to be henceforward an indispensable prerequisite to the laying of the application before a Conference Committee. According to the ordinary, so far as I know, the universal interpretation of legislative enactments or permissions, the insertion of a conditional clause with "if" before and "then" after it, distinctly implies that "if" the condition be *not* fulfilled, "then" the permission will not be granted. So, at least, it was understood by the opponents of the organ in Brunswick Chapel, Leeds. The case was accordingly laid before the Leeds District Committee, which after careful consideration and anxious and exhaustive investigation, decided by a large majority, that on account of the divided state of feeling and opinion on the subject (but a small majority of the trustees themselves being in favour of the organ), the question was not yet ripe for discussion, and they could not, with due regard to the reason and the spirit of the law, accord the sanction which the law made indispensable. That was not unnaturally supposed both by District Meeting and Leaders' Meeting to decide the matter for a twelvemonth.

But four of the Brunswick trustees were not in the mood of "Believers waiting." So they determined to carry their point, despite the District Meeting and the plain English of the law. They made the most industrious use of the interval between District Meeting and Conference in waiting on influential Ministers, especially in London. They won over to their side the eminent John Stephens, who, as was expected, occupied the chair at the Conference. Their pertinacity and importunity were so successful that, against the most earnest warning and entreaty of the Superintendent of the disturbed circuit, the Conference set aside the law, and disregarded the deliberate judgment of the District Meeting, whose legal function it was to investigate such cases and to postpone or pass them on to Conference, as they thought best. This proved to be, as was foretold by those who were acquainted with the facts, a most disastrous blunder. And, in all affairs of Church-contention, *Beware of the first blunder*, for the first blunder is very apt to commit you to all the rest of the unhappy series. It is a most perilous proceeding for the highest Church Court to take the initiative in irregularity.

Against this Mr. Bunting himself had faithfully forewarned the Conference some years before, in his golden axiom: "If *we* do not respect our laws, what wonder that our people should not heed them?"

Besides, this act of Conference started in the mind of Methodism a very grave inquiry. Is the Wesleyan Methodist Conference bound by its own law so long as it remains its law? Its right to rescind or repeal was not disputed, but so long as the rule is still in force, is it not binding on the Conference as well as on the people? The Organ Law of 1820 had been made for the very purpose of preventing the harmony of the Society from being sacrificed to the tastes and preferences of any particular portion of the congregation. The ministers of the circuit, as guardians of that harmony, had earnestly warned the Conference that the immediate introduction of an organ into Brunswick Chapel, Leeds, would seriously imperil the peace of the society and obstruct the work of God. The District Meeting, as the constitutional court upon the matter, had arrived at the same conclusion and deliberately refused its sanction. As to the natural and obvious meaning of the law, let anyone who compares its wording with that of any other enactment expressed in the like terms say whether the Leeds Leaders or the Leeds District Meeting can be charged with factiousness for taking it to mean precisely what it says?

Take the first passage that comes to hand of the Mosaic legislation, the law of the "sin offering." "If his means suffice not for a lamb *then* he shall bring . . . two turtle doves, etc." (Lev. - v. 7, R.V.) If a well-conditioned sheepmaster should have come to the priest with two turtle doves instead of a lamb, and the Priest had reminded him of the condition on which two turtle doves might be substituted, would he have ventured to put forth the interpretation of the organ-law which has been advanced in favour of the trustees who persisted in their application to Conference, despite the law of Conference requiring the sanction of the District Meeting, and despite the refusal of the District Meeting to sanction the application? Would the well-to-do sheep owner have coolly answered: "The law certainly may be made to say 'that if his means suffice for a lamb, he must bring a lamb'?" But "that is not its *only possible* meaning." Is a law to be taken in its plain meaning or in some "possible" interpretation?

The object and the spirit of the law of 1820 were as

clear as they were kindly and pacific—namely, *to interpose an additional safeguard against the discord* which had in some cases resulted from the introduction of an organ in the face of a strong objection to it on the part of many members of the society. The allowing the four Brunswick trustees to apply directly to the Conference, notwithstanding the deliberate refusal of the District Meeting's sanction, the anti-organists maintained, had nullified and stultified the law of 1820 by practically reverting to an obsolete and superseded law. That this view was not "factious" is plain from the present usage. Since the prejudice against organs has died away, and the question has become a mere matter of ways and means, the Conference has wisely transferred to the Chapel Committee the authorisation of an organ in a Methodist chapel. But if the District Committee or the District Sub-committee in cases of supposed urgency, decline to sanction the application, the *matter goes no further* till some future District Committee deems it safe to accede to a re-application.

The Organ Law of 1820, as interpreted in favour of the Brunswick trustees, proved a most unfortunate piece of legislation for the interests of Methodism in Leeds and elsewhere, inasmuch as it introduced into the discussion a highly superfluous element of irritation and chagrin. It was contended that the word "*sanction* of the District Committee" was meant by the Conference to be taken in its proper legislative sense.

Even on the opposite hypothesis, it was strange that on a representation from four trustees, the judgment of the regular court, which had carefully investigated the matter on the spot, should be set aside.

But it is necessary to note a few of the leading events at Leeds between the Conferences of 1827 and 1828. During the interregnum, between the departure of the old Superintendent and the arrival of the new one, it was resolved by the leaders and local preachers to make a brotherly appeal to the trustees, not to act upon the permission of the Conference without an earnest attempt to come to some understanding with the leaders and local preachers, and to request the incoming Superintendent to arrange a meeting for that purpose. A deputation of leaders and local preachers waited on the new Superintendent, and presented their petition. He took time to consider and to consult with the Conference leader in whom he had most confidence, and at last informed the deputation of his resolve not to

interfere in a matter on which the Conference had given judgment. This determination was announced by the deputation to a large meeting of leaders and local preachers, who incontinently formulated their disappointment and chagrin into hot-tempered resolutions embodying their conviction that the granting of the application of the trustees was not only in opposition to the views of the society as expressed through the Leaders' Meeting, but also in disregard of the deliberate non-sanction of the District Meeting, which the Conference itself had made the condition of any such application, and that this was an act of arbitrary authority, setting itself above its own express and printed law. They declared "that such an assumption of power must necessarily lessen the confidence of the people." With extravagant irritation and impatience, a local preacher, Mr. Matthew Johnson, at once took the initiative in a systematic agitation, called together the local preachers of the two Leeds Circuits in meetings which were as contrary to the Methodist law as was the application to Conference by the Brunswick trustees.

A brother local preacher, after due warning, brought a charge against Johnson at the Local Preachers' Meeting for convoking unauthorised assemblies. The Superintendent appealed to him on behalf of the peace and welfare of the Church to desist from these irregularities. This he defiantly refused to do, and the Superintendent pronounced upon him the very mild sentence of suspension from his office for three months unless he should in the meantime come to a better mind. Thereupon more than seventy local preachers made common cause with Johnson, and declared that so long as he was silenced they would sit in silence too. Johnson, proving ostentatiously aggressive, was summarily expelled from the society. As this act did not assuage the contest, the Superintendent fell back upon the supreme resort of the chairman of a district who finds himself unequal single handed to his task. He summoned a Special District Meeting upon the case; being both the new Superintendent of the disturbed circuit and the new Chairman of the District. The Special District Meeting was distinctly and explicitly defined, both as to its purpose and its composition, in the famous supplement to and completion of the *Plan of Pacification*, called *The Leeds Regulations*, because they had been made by the Conference held in that town in the great year of readjustment and of settlement, 1797. The Leeds people were not likely to be oblivious of the *Leeds Regulations*. The whole tone of the document was pacificatory

and conciliatory in the highest degree. The law of the Special District Meeting ran thus :—

"That no Chairman may have cause to complain of the want of power in cases which, according to his judgment, cannot be settled in the ordinary District Meeting, he shall have authority to summon three of the nearest Superintendents, to be incorporated with the District Meeting and they shall have equal authority to vote and settle everything until the Conference.

"The President of the Conference shall assist at any District Meeting, if applied to for that purpose by the Chairman of the District."

The functions of the Special District Meeting are thus defined in Peirce's "*Ecclesiastical Principles and Polity of the Wesleyan Methodists*," edited by Dr. Osborn and Dr. Jobson :—

"The Special District Meeting is a court of appeal for the *settling of all disputes* during the interval of the Conference, whether in the body of the preachers or amongst the members of the societies, or between the preachers and the people" (p. 398).

The restriction of the Chairman's choice to "three of the *nearest* Superintendents" was fair-minded and considerate. As the selection of *all* the additional members of the meeting was in the Chairman's hands, and not one was left to the people, it was felt right to restrict the range of his selection, lest he should be tempted to call to his assistance personal friends or men of the greatest Connexional influence and prestige. But the Chairman of the Leeds District, who was also Superintendent of the disturbed Leeds Circuit, not finding the men most to his mind within the prescribed limits, thought fit to ignore those limits, and go farther afield than the law allowed. And beyond this, the most potent factor in the whole Connexion was imported into the judicial court, in the person of the Rev. Jabez Bunting, to whom the law gave no standing place whatever in the meeting. In order to this, a new function was created of which the Constitution was entirely ignorant. He was that year Secretary of the Conference; and under the unknown style and title of "Official Adviser of the President"—a function and a title this, with which neither President nor Chairman had the slightest power to invest him or any other person.

The Special District Meeting could not but pronounce the unauthorised meetings, called by leading local preachers, to be illegal and most reprehensible. But as the meeting had no *legislative or administrative power*, matters had to take their

ordinary course. The insurgents were left to the investigation and the verdict of the Leaders' Meeting. But no member of the Leaders' Meeting was allowed to vote who had not first committed himself, either in speech or by the signature of a document, to find according to the Superintendent's view of the case. This was felt to be an unwarrantable interference with the freedom and the spontaneity of the Leaders' Meeting as an empanelled jury bound to give a verdict according to the evidence adduced. These successive liberties with Connexional law, on the part of the champions and enforcers of the law, not only exasperated and inflamed the disputants, but brought into the dispute fresh elements of a deeper and a far more widely reaching nature than that which had arisen many months before. Then the matter began and ended with the question, "Has a small majority of the trustees the power of changing the mode of conducting public worship, against the wishes and convictions of a very large number of the Church members?" When the Conference met in 1828, the case had become much more complicated than it had been left twelve months before.

Mr. Bunting was elected President, but by a much smaller majority than he would have certainly commanded but for his connection with the Leeds affair. "In view of the Leeds case, . . . he did not carry a majority of the votes given." ("Life of Dr. Bunting," p. 604.) The vote of thanks to the ex-President was coupled with a reservation as to the composition and the conduct of the Special District Meeting at Leeds. This vote of thanks with *reservation*, moved by one ex-President and seconded by another, was acknowledged by the retiring President with meek and lowly gratitude. But his "ex-official adviser," the retiring Secretary, now President himself, was of very different metal. The like thanks with the like reservation being offered him, he declared that he would receive no thanks with any reservation, nor listen to any animadversions on his conduct *unless a charge against him was submitted in writing.*" (See Smith's "History of Methodism," vol. iii., p. 131.) Once more the Conference gave in. The reservation submitted to by the ex-President was withdrawn from the ex-Secretary.

In 1832, notwithstanding his repeated protestations to the contrary, when the Conference firmly stood upon its own dignity, Mr. Bunting quietly gave way. And may we not apply and accommodate to the position he assumed in 1826 and 1828, the words used by Dr. George Smith in "History of Methodism,"

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with regard to the affair of 1834: "Nor should the Conference have been put in the position in which it was placed by such language"?\* It would have produced the happiest results to himself and the Connexion had he from the first been given to understand that no minister in the Methodist Connexion, however great his gifts and services may be, can be indulged in irresponsibility to his brethren in the Conference for his personal and his official conduct. Yet, of course, the utmost possible indulgence—consistent with the general welfare—was due to a minister of such rare gifts and services.

An event which forms a chapter alike in the history of Methodism and in the life of Dr. Bunting, is this famous "Leeds Case," which occasioned the first of the three concatenated secessions, which, beginning in 1827, ended in the dire catastrophe of 1849. Strong and searching light is cast upon the subject by Mr. Fowler's "Journal of the Conference of 1828," when the whole matter was brought under thorough and solicitous discussion:—

Daniel Isaac deplored the hastiness, as he thought, of the treatment of the Leeds disturbances, considering the importance of the interests at stake, and of the fact that the three ministers, who had been three years upon the ground, and the District Meeting—which had carefully investigated the matter on the spot—had been so earnestly in favour of delay. He also deplored the unauthorised elements which had been imported into the Special District Meeting.

Mr. Ward expressed his strong concurrence with the views of Mr. Isaac. His calmly-expressed judgment had all the greater weight from the fact of his being well acquainted with the ground and with the state of things, he having left the Leeds West Circuit just before the outburst of the storm.

Richard Watson, speaking from his own experience, questioned the wisdom of the Leeds ministers who had allowed themselves to be sucked into the vortex of agitation through the public press. Whilst he warmly recognised the ability of their defence of Methodism against Congregationalism, he condemned the depriving of the Leaders' Meeting of its guaranteed rights by forbidding voice or vote to every leader who would not either sign or vocally assent to a written document, which would have committed him beforehand to one particular side. He concluded by proposing that the permission to erect an organ

\* Book VIII., Chap. 3.

in Brunswick Chapel, Leeds, which was given by the Conference of 1827, should be suspended till the Conference of 1829, in order to allow time for a strenuous effort to bring the trustees' meeting on the one hand, and the leaders and local preachers on the other, into a brotherly accommodation of the matter in dispute.

It is noteworthy that not one of the speakers who had been in the ministry during Wesley's lifetime approved of the way in which the Leeds dissensions had been dealt with.

The speaking was pretty evenly divided between the approvers and the disapprovers of the disciplinary action at Leeds. The chief objections were to the *precipitancy* of the action and to the introduction into the very composition of the Special District Meeting of factors not authorised by the sacred settlement between pastors and people embodied in the *Plan of Pacification* in 1795, and the completing *Leeds Regulations* of 1797. The President (Mr. Bunting) concluded the debate by a speech, occupying "several hours." ("Life of Dr. Bunting.") It was a fine specimen of his forensic oratory. He expressed his sorrow that the course pursued had not met with the approval of "the fathers" of the Conference; but he contended that whatever straining of the Constitution, and stretching, or even overpassing, of the law had been resorted to, was justified by "the emergency"; that the movement was at heart "an insurrection against the pastoral office," and, as such, required to be put down effectively, and once for all. He confessed that his own strong counsels had been all the stronger from a dread of the politics of the chief dissentients and their journalistic advocates.

Mr. Bunting's speech swayed the assembled brethren. The Conference adopted the conclusions of the Special District Meeting, although "seven shepherds and princes among men" voted against it. The wording of the second of the long series of resolutions on the subject, published in the Minutes, is very noticeable:—"That it is the judgment of the Conference that the Special District Meeting held in Leeds was both indispensably necessary, and, *in the most extraordinary emergency, constitutional also.*" (M., p. 80.)

An address from the Quarterly Meeting of the South London Circuit, remonstrating against the composition and the action of the Special District Meeting at Leeds, this Conference "declined taking 'into their further consideration,' on the very fair

ground that the said address had been printed and circulated among the preachers and others before it could be presented to the Conference, and also appears to have been exhibited in booksellers' shops for sale." The Conference, however, goes on to "reprehend" the contents of the address in considerable detail.

It is to be noted that Mr. Bunting, in his closing speech, frankly and boldly took upon himself the entire responsibility of the policy pursued at Leeds. His deliverance had from first to last, the tone of self-defence—indeed he afterwards remarked, "*I have myself been under question for six days.*"

I never met with any one who knew Mr. Grindrod who doubted that, in his treatment of the Leeds disturbances as Superintendent and Chairman, he acted under the direction of a more inflexible will and a more impetuous nature than his own, for his action was out of keeping with his habits and his temperament and the general context of his ministerial life. During his probation he had been Mr. Bunting's colleague, and Mr. T. Percival Bunting truly says: "Not one of my father's contemporaries was more thoroughly imbued with his principles and feelings. So thoroughly were their relations understood, that some were not unwilling to taunt the other with copying more closely than was consistent with individual sympathies and opinions those of the master-mind to which he owed his training." (*"Life of Dr. Bunting,"* p. 290.) I am constrained to testify that Mr. Grindrod was one of the gentlest and kindest and most dispassionate of men.

On a review of the entire Leeds Case, one cannot but regret that the Conference did not adhere to its own Organ Law of 1820 in its natural and straightforward sense. To one who like myself is intimately acquainted with the Yorkshire variety of the John Bull genus, having lived for years in each of the three Ridings, and who was, moreover, lovingly familiar with Leeds Methodism full sixty years ago, it seems certain that had the deliberate non-sanction of the Brunswick organ by the District Meeting been respected by the Conference, the deplorable dissension would not have come to pass or, at least, have reached its acute convulsive stage, and this painful and humiliating chapter in our Methodist history would have remained unwritten and the formation of a new antagonistic sect would have been most happily avoided. At the very least the intensity of the paroxysm would have been assuaged, and the area of disturbance would

have been very much contracted. The typical Yorkshireman is excessively ignitable, and soon becomes crusty when subject to hard baking. He can make himself as unreasonably awkward and untoward and cross-grained and "*stumpy*" as you will ; but of all men whom I ever came across, he is the most accessible to considerate and conciliatory treatment, the most amenable to gentle handling, and the least capable of holding out against concession. True enough, he can be as grumpy and short-tempered as the best of us, and even spleenful, on what he deems sufficient provocation—*i.e.* if he thinks you want to "put upon" him ; but well-administered, persistent humouring soon betrays him into yieldingness. No better scenery than that of Yorkshire would serve for the famous match between the Sun and the Wind, to see whether of the two can the sooner win the cloak from the sturdy wayfarer. The wind may take King Lear for its adviser, and "crack its chaps" to wrest the outer garment from the struggling traveller. The more violent the blast, with the more deadly, desperate tenacity does he clasp the covering to his chest. The Wind may blow the man away, his cloak and all, more easily than tear it from his grasp. But no sooner does the Sun begin to play upon the man with searching beams than his grasp begins to slacken and his sinews to unthread, until full soon he strips himself of his own accord of the very thing that he had clung to with such strong determination. Many a time and oft have I watched this process in my native county. I could fill page after page with amusing and affecting illustrations of the inspired proverb : "A soft tongue breaketh the bone." Yes, a gentle voice is the great bone-breaker, the strong-beaked ossifrage to a resolute and rigid Yorkshireman.

I may give two instances of this in the case of Brunswick Methodists, which were nearly forty years apart. At my first District Meeting—that of this same Leeds District—a most strenuous contest was fought out upon a boundary dispute, occasioned by the selection of the site for a new chapel. The delimitation of the Venezuelan frontier or the ownership of the Oregon territory could hardly have seemed a worthier subject of dispute than the question whether a certain tract of town belonged to Brunswick or to Oxford Place. The representatives of both chapels were in force. A splendid map of the contested district on a large scale was spread out upon the table. Both sides were "armed and well prepared" to fight the matter out. The Brunswickers of history never took up ground upon the battlefield

with a more dogged determination than did their namesakes for this synodal struggle. We youngers at the bottom of the room, especially those of us who knew the mettle of the combatants, were on the *qui vive* for a battle royal. Assuredly had there been the slightest side-taking on the part of any member of the court we should have had a scene and a sensation. One "question fierce" would have certainly provoked a "stern reply" and have "given signal soon of high debate," for when Leeds meets Leeds then comes the tug of war. But no, such was the impartiality, such the imperturbability, the suavity, the absolute confidence in the fairness, single-mindedness, and candour of the disputants, that the knot was soon untied without flash of sword or tightening twist on one side or on the other. Those who had looked forward to an opportunity of displaying all their prowess and their puissance were just a little crestfallen—that was all!

Some forty years later, I found myself in the chair of a Conference Committee Meeting, held near Leeds, where some Connexional arrangements of no small importance were to be considered. Unfortunately, an unmollified soreness existed between two members of the Board, one of them being the fullest type of an explosive Brunswicker. A somewhat hard reply from his able, influential antagonist, set the ignitable Leeds layman all ablaze. The hindrance to business and the detriment to an enterprise of pith and moment would have been very serious had things gone thus "aglee," so there was nothing for it but for the chairman to turn lion-tamer. But, happily, he knew the natural history of the kingly specimen before him, and was able, without the aid of crowbar or of throttling cord, to reduce the touchy and yet trusty brother to the still strength of one of Landseer's lions in Trafalgar Square. After the meeting he sidled up to me and said with a meek *naïveté*: "What a mercy it is to have a man in the chair who can have some patience with bad-tempered people!" To which I answered twinklingly, with hand upon his arm: "O, when one knows a man is *Johnick*, what use can there be in vexing him?"

Another characteristic of the Yorkshireman presented a ready, strong facility for composing the dispute between the trustees of Brunswick Chapel and its leaders and local preachers. Your genuine West Ridinger is, of all mortals, the most musical. I know no part of England where sacred music as a passion has so percolated all strata of society. Sixty years ago, at least, many a working man and working man's wife and mother would

pinch for a week to buy tickets for an oratorio, and at the matchless Saturday evening band meeting at Eastbrook Chapel, Bradford, no one but a new minister was in the least surprised to hear a workman say: "Ye mind, friends, I've had a rare lift heavenwards this week; I saved up for t' oratorio: it were t' *Messiah*. Hay! but it were omost like being i' heaven." In Leeds itself, next to the Parish Church, the two most striking structures in the town when I first strolled staring along its streets were Brunswick Chapel, in its solid, stately isolation, and the Music Hall, with its imposing portico.

The people's heart was towards sacred music. But of all congregations in the kingdom that of Brunswick, Leeds, was the least dependent on such aids, and, on the other hand, the least likely to be injured by them. Samuel Wesley, on opening the organ, said: "Those Leeds folks made me play second fiddle." During the many times I have had the privilege of worshipping in that spacious sanctuary the singing of the congregation has been mighty and exultant, and the choir has been so full-voiced that the colossal organ has been made to know its place as an unobtrusive, meek accompaniment to the human voice divine. One has been too "throng" in swelling the full tide of praise or in regaling on the deliciousness of this or that especial voice, distinguished even amid such a mass of melody, to take much note of the pealing organ's tone.

The eager and impatient haste of the four trustees, who pushed the matter with such contempt of consequences, was just as mistaken and unfounded as was the objection of the leaders and the local preachers. Methodism had grown to a mighty social and religious factor in that great industrial centre, without one organ in its chapels, and the population of the place flocked to hear the preaching, and to join in the singing and the praying in the big Brunswick Chapel. It would do no harm at all to wait another year, and that was all the non-sanction of the District Meeting came to. The Brunswick Methodists would then have had full time to talk each other into the same mind—"the good old Methodist" plan of pacification, which one has often seen to work so well.

There is not the slightest need to seek for any worse motive for the opposition to the organ on the part of the leaders and local preachers than that which they themselves assigned—a misgiving as to the effect upon spirituality in congregational worship. The pacific Organ Law of 1820 became the sad

occasion of the very disruption it was intended to prevent. The Leeds Methodists, the praise of whom had gone abroad throughout all the world, might have adapted the poet's lament:—

*To the Organ Law of 1820.*

Hadst thou not been meant so kindly,  
Hadst thou not been broken blindly;  
Never made, or never slighted,  
We had not been disunited.

By the testimony of Conference itself, up to the moment of the unthought-of disregarding of the deliberate non-sanction of the District Meeting, the Brunswick leaders and local preachers had shown themselves a law-abiding, loyal people. The right of the Leaders' Meeting to memorialise the Conference on the subject, and therefore of necessity to take cognisance of the subject, and discuss and vote upon it, was admitted, both by Special District Meeting and by Conference. The impatient urgency of the four importunate trustees had no ground whatever in the vital interests of the cause. The Trustees' Meeting itself was far from unanimity on the matter. It was carried there "by a small majority." (*London Quarterly* article.) The question of the mode of conducting worship was admittedly not a question for trustees only. It had spiritual aspects, bearings, and results.

Having Methodist relatives in Leeds, and a large circle of influential Methodist friends, I became lovingly familiar with the joyous, energetic Methodism of the place. And I have no doubt whatever that had the non-sanction of the District Meeting been respected, and instead of a Special District Meeting, four or five of the most saintly and persuasive ministers, such as Entwisle, Reece, Sutcliffe, Morley, Griffith, been deputed to meet the trustees and leaders, all might have been amicably settled.

These irregularities in the interests of legality and order, and on the part of the guardians and champions of both, were most unfortunate in their results. The friends of order found it no light task to vindicate them. The legal intellect of Mr. T. P. Bunting evidently did not like the brief. He prudently confines himself to his duty as a biographer, "to vindicate as best he may the course his father took." And the one defence attempted by the resourceful Dr. Bunting was that they were "*constitutional in the extraordinary circumstances.*" (The italics

are his.) This, of course, implies that, but for the very extraordinary circumstances, they would have been unconstitutional. But the only reason one can think of why it might seem expedient to stretch a point or two to ensure success would seem to suggest a counter-reason for the utmost regularity of action and a punctilious propriety in the whole conduct of the case. Two or three of the leading malcontents were very awkward men to handle—quick-witted, keen-witted, resolute, and self-confident. They might be trusted not to let slip the least advantage of catching and tripping up opponents. And more bitter elements were mingled in the cauldron when the question had arisen as to the fairness and the legality of the interpretation which Conference had put upon its own law. This interpretation did, in point of practical working, nullify and stultify the law itself, and that so plainly as to necessitate its alteration. It is noteworthy that the least undignified and unassuming change was found to be to give to it, not the sense which had been assigned to it in favour of the organ party in the Leeds dispute, but a still more stringent sense than that in which the leaders and the local preachers had understood it. For finding the law either misleading or inoperative, many trustees' meetings very sensibly gave it the go-by, and went straight to Conference; or if a Superintendent insisted on the formality of reporting the matter to the District Meeting, the brethren saw neither use nor sense in staying away from their families to pursue investigation and pronounce a judgment which three or four importunate and interfering trustees might snap their fingers at in triumph.

By 1836, the year of Mr. Bunting's third presidency, the whole affair had got into such a farcical muddle as to be quite too much for his sense of order and his sense of humour. So from the chair of the Conference he declared "The difference between rule and practice brings us into contempt, and makes us laughed at. I therefore think it would be well to give the District Meeting the power to determine the case of every organ." But the brethren could not help seeing that this new move would bring into contempt and laughter their action in 1827, the maintaining of which had cost the Connexion thousands of members and thrown it into a protracted paroxysm. And here was the self-same ecclesiastical statesman proposing from the chair of the Conference the very thing which in a memorable



document he had drawn up and they had adopted, had been represented as impossible and unthinkable—namely, “to constitute a mere District Committee of its own body, however respectable, the *final* and absolute judges of the question in which the interests and wishes of responsible trustees might, in their judgment, be involved, such a design would at once prove what is now falsely and unjustly imagined—the tyranny of the Conference over those whom it is bound to help.”

Yet this was at last actually decided on at Mr. Bunting’s instance, and has been acted on ever since with the happiest results.

Every slip, every curve in the course of the champions of legality was sure to be “observed, set in a notebook, read, and conned by heart,” and then published from the house-tops and proclaimed throughout the country through the press. And the question had become one of law and constitutionality. The complaint of the Leeds dissentients was this: that the Conference, in setting aside the decision of the District Meeting, had set aside its own decision, and yet the cause assigned for summoning the Special District Meeting was the disregard of law on the part of the objectors. All this craved wary walking and a resolute adherence to the Apostolic policy—“What I do, that I will do, that I may cut off occasion from them that desire occasion” (2 Cor. xi. 12).

The most prominent and impetuous inciter and organiser of the agitation was a meddlesome, hot-blooded Leader, who loved to kick the traces and to get the bit between his teeth. This is plain from his whole history. But as I never saw him to my knowledge, I can only judge him from hearsay and from reading. But as the Conference saw full clearly, the guiding spirit of the storm was a much more public man—a long-famous Methodist schoolmaster, Mr. Sigston. Him I remember vividly, having studied him intently at the time of his meridian notability and notoriety, as an active educationist and author of cheap school-books, much more popular to Managing Committees than to more or less unmanageable schoolboys. I had hour after hour bent over his unfascinating primers, and made from them my earliest essays at Englishing unclassic Latin. But it was as the founder of a new denomination that I took a careful cast of his countenance and figure for my private little gallery of Methodist

celebrities. His followers were locally called either "Sigstonites" or "Noncons." He was a noticeable, though a not distinguished-looking personage. He had none of the imposing massiveness of the three Methodist Yorkshire schoolmasters—Swale of Halifax, Welch of Hull, and Parker of the Grove. He was an eager-eyed and wedge-faced personality, with mobile features and a penetrating glance, quick and sudden in his movements and with an incisive and decisive tone, and the self-reliant look of one accustomed to lay down the law. He was best known to the Connexion as the bosom-friend and the biographer of William Bramwell, the revivalist, who died beneath his roof. This had thrown around him a certain hagiographic halo, and, along with his reputation for superior culture and intelligence, had invested him with considerable influence and popularity. Mr. Sigston had published a theological tractate which indulged in self-sufficient speculation, not restrained by Holy Writ, and this he had laboured hard to introduce into Sunday-school and other libraries. But both before and after 1827 he showed himself about as hard to work with as to deal with; and it was affirmed in Conference that for some years before the organ discords he had absented himself from Leaders' Meetings. As I remember him, he had the pedagogic air of one of whom it might be said: "Behold thou . . . art confident that thou thyself art a guide of the blind, a light of them which are in darkness, an instructor of the foolish, a teacher of babes." (Rom. i. 17, 19, 20.)

No doubt the Chairman and the President were of opinion that what was wanted to confront such men as these was the best embodiment of high Connexional authority and influence, and of unbending strength of will. But these were not the men to be overawed by prestige, and if it comes to a *stand up fight* between will-force and will-force, your Yorkshireman is "bad to beat," and you should provision your "laager" for a determined and protracted onset. What was really done by these departures from the law was to put into the hands of the "opponents" an ugly, two-edged, jagged weapon, which they were safe to grasp with firmness and to wield with skill and strength.

Had Mr. Bunting confined himself to this newly-heard-of and ephemeral function, there might have been less objection to his appearance in the District Meeting. But, by the statements on both sides, he not only spoke and voted as of equal

right with the parties authorised by the law, but he took the principal part both in discussion and decision. His son records : "Doubtless it was he who guided the deliberations and decisions of the Special District Meeting." ("Life of Dr. Bunting.") This the dissentients did not look on as fair play. They complained that the most potent factor in the court which had condemned them was one the legitimacy and constitutionality of whose membership of the court the constituting law was ignorant.

Once allowed a seat in the Assembly Mr. Bunting was sure to take the lead. Of a grand and lofty character, with a simple-minded and dominant enthusiasm for the consolidation and extension of original Methodism, he had yet, like other mighty men, the besetting weakness of his enormous strength. And to adapt a fine figure from Mrs. Browning : "What wonder if the athlete, crowned for conquest, should show upon his laurelled locks the dust of the arena." His weakness, in his own nomenclature, was "impetuosity," and in his son's was "masterfulness." ("Life of Dr. Bunting.")

The condemned party found fault with his language and his gestures, in his keen cross-questionings and judicial charges. It seems a curious fact that when he was a third time President, nine years later, and felt his need of counsel in piloting the Connexion through the boisterous after-swell of the Warrenite cyclone, he utterly forgot the principle acted on when he himself was Secretary, that "the official adviser of the President" was the Secretary of the Conference. He said, "I wish for a *Committee* of Advice; which I pre-eminently need. I hope that no case will occur which I shall not be prepared to meet. Time was when I could have taken the Grand Turk by the beard." He himself proposed the members of the Committee. It consisted of four ex-Presidents, with the Editor, and several others, but the poor Secretary of the Conference, sitting at his elbow, though no less a man than Robert Newton, was left out in the unkindly cold.

Mr. T. P. Bunting says :—"I do not believe that in his latest days the Secretary (Mr. Bunting) would have cared to argue the point of the constitutionality of making the Secretary of the Conference an integral member of a judicial court, in the capacity of official adviser of the President." ("Life of Dr. Bunting.") It is clear that in his later days he would not have attempted to defend it. The President of the Conference is himself the official adviser of Chairmen of Districts who need

his counsel, and of other ministers when chairmen are at fault. When the Conference intends its Secretary to be a *member* of any committee, court, or commission, he is named in the resolution which constitutes the court.

The speakers in Conference who disapproved of the treatment of "the Leeds Case" objected to the want of strict and sensitive adherence to the law, on the part of its too eager and impetuous administrators, and the not maintaining constantly the gentle and pacific spirit of "the Leeds Regulations" and the other documents which form our written constitution. These all breathed the principles of New Testament administration. "Let us follow after things which make for peace, and things whereby we may edify one another." "Overthrow not for meat the work of God." (Rom. xiv. 19, 20.) For "meat" read *music*.

The objection that the Superintendent of a Liverpool Circuit could with no show of fairness be reckoned amongst three of the nearest Superintendents, has been recently pronounced "a verbal quibble." ("London Quarterly.") But no such ground as that either was or could be taken at the time. To get from Liverpool to Leeds two of the largest and most circuit-crowded districts in the kingdom had to be passed over, the Halifax, Bradford, and Huddersfield District and the Manchester District, besides part of the Liverpool District itself. And seventy years ago as to mere *time*, a journey by the *mail* from Liverpool to Leeds and back took full four and a half times as many hours as a journey from London to Leeds and back takes now. And the risk and discomfort in the former case were incalculably greater still. But such violent dealing with language was never thought of then. Mr. Grindrod's plea for the liberty he had taken with the law was that he had assumed the limitation of the range of his selection, therein plainly made, to be an economical consideration, and had met that by meeting the expenses of the three far-fetched ministers from private sources.

But a member of the Conference who had thrice been President and was one of the drawers up of the law itself, assured the Conference that financial considerations formed the very smallest part of the reason for the restriction; that the real object was to preclude the very thing which the neglect of the restriction brought to pass, namely, the choosing of men who were most likely to side with the Superintendent. There could be no fair and valid reason for disregarding both the wording and the purpose of the law by going beyond the four contiguous *districts*

in search of three of the nearest Superintendents as co-assessors in the Special District Meeting. Hard by, at Halifax, was Theophilus Lessey, who was chosen President in the centenary year 1839, and the nearest Superintendents in the Halifax, Bradford, and Huddersfield, the York, the Sheffield, and the Hull Districts, were just the sort of men for such a court—trusty, kindly, and experienced.

Another aggravation of this deplorable division was the infusion into it of the political element. There is no need whatever to discuss the indignant repudiation of this by the political "Noncons.," in order to promote the principles of any political by-ends, in the *earlier* stages of the opposition. But after the decision of the Conference to disregard the non-sanction of the District Meeting, and the resolute refusal of the Superintendent to mediate between the triumphant trustees and the discomfited leaders and local preachers, the affair soon drifted hopelessly amongst the seething shallows and booming breakers of political hypothesis and of bitter party aims. This was the natural and the inevitable sequence of making the *Leeds Mercury* and another deeply coloured newspaper the organs of the agitation. The *Leeds Mercury* had long been the most popular and effective mouthpiece of advanced Yorkshire Liberalism, and it made capital in more respects than one out of the Methodist disturbances. Mr. Baines most unfairly weighed the merits of the case in a Congregationalist balance, and seized the opportunity of discrediting Connexionalism. The political warp which was thus given to the movement soon became conspicuous. The testimony of the Rev. Thomas Galland, M.A., on this point is conclusive. Of all the Methodist preachers, he was at once the richest and most Radical. He told the Conference that he had been brought up and nurtured in the most advanced school of Liberalism, but that if anything could have cured him of his congenital and hereditary Liberalism, the manifestations of Methodist Liberalism which he had felt and seen in Leeds would have accomplished that therapeutic triumph. The fact is, they had touched him upon his tenderest point. Benevolent, kind-hearted, and tremblingly alive all over with popular and philanthropic sympathy, he was unable to doff the scholar and the gentleman. They had branded him as "tax-gatherer" because, like the other ministers, he entered in the class-books the money given at the visitation for the renewal of the tickets, and took his share with the brethren in collecting the subscriptions to the Connexional funds. I can bear my

testimony, however, that this genial, godly minister was never cured of either Whiggery or waggery, but retained both in fullest force to the very end of life.

When the seceders started a denominational magazine of their own, the political germs embedded in their minds burst forth with tropical luxuriance. Mr. Hammett, an American Methodist minister, was present at the Conference of 1829, and heard the discussions on the subject. It must be remembered that the Leeds secessionists at first assumed the name of Non-conformist Methodists, and were hence popularly known as "Noncons." But they soon changed it for that of Protestant Methodists, which they borrowed from a singularly contemporaneous schism in the Methodist Episcopal Church. Mr. Hammett told the Conference that on reading the *English Protestant Methodist Magazine*, he found that the Leeds dissentients had assumed, along with the name, the animating principle of their transatlantic namesakes. This he declared to be "intensely political: the spirit of Radicalism." He gave a detailed and highly interesting account of the American secession.

According to the authorised returns, the loss of members of the society in the town of Leeds alone was 1,040. ("Smith's Methodism," p. 123.) In Yeadon the depletion was proportionately much more serious. The seceders were strong enough to build a chapel almost half as large again as the chapel they had left, and with a more imposing frontage and a better situation; indeed, until the present Wesleyan Methodist Chapel was erected the "Noncon." Chapel was the most distinguished-looking public building in the place. In Barnsley the "Noncon." seceders numbered 240, with eleven local preachers and seven leaders; in Halifax, 200; in Preston, 200, with its most popular local preachers; York, 39, including one of the oldest and most influential families in the city. These statistics were reported to the Conference by the Superintendents of the respective circuits. But many other circuits were, on the like authority, described as being rescued from disruption only by cautious and conciliatory administration. From the north bank of the Tyne to the south bank of the Thames the societies were shaken with a perilous excitement.

And this was not the end of the affair. The discussion of the Leeds Case in so many great Connexional centres, and the resolutions on the subject printed in the Minutes of the Conference,

were found to have started questions much more readily raised than laid to rest. This was made apparent by a startling after-clap, which burst upon the Conference in Leeds in 1830, in the form of an address, memorial, or remonstrance from the Second London Circuit (Queen Street), which even Reece and Atherton had not been able to keep back. It complained of the Leeds affair, and protested against the mode of dealing with that matter being made, as it had been in the Minutes of Conference for 1829, an interpreting precedent for dealing with all future cases of the kind.

It is impossible not to wonder how it is to be accounted for that such unprecedentedly strong, and in some points constitutionally unwarranted and "exasperating" measures were resorted to in dealing with the Leeds objectors to an organ. The way they themselves accounted for it was this: It was well known that Mr Bunting had said in Conference, "The Yorkshire Methodists, with all their excellencies, need teaching a lesson." "This, then," they said, "is the lesson Jabez Bunting thinks we need." Now a Yorkshire Methodist is not unteachable if he be properly approached, but "the men" of Leeds have a strong objection to be taught as Gideon taught the men of Succoth, "with thorns of the wilderness and briars." (Judges viii. 16.) But another question now arises. How did Mr. Bunting come by the impression that the Yorkshire Methodists were in need of such stern schooling? Nowhere had his preaching been so appreciated and effective as in his three Yorkshire Circuits—Sheffield, Halifax, and Leeds. Nowhere had Mr. Bunting been more successful as a soul winner than at Leeds; some of the foremost Methodists, such as Mr. Richard Oastler and Mr. Burton, of Roundhay, had been converted by his preaching. The best judges who sat under his ministry at Leeds describe his Sunday night appeals and closing prayers as simply overwhelming. Nowhere had he been so popular. Nowhere was the personality of Jabez Bunting surrounded by such a glowing nimbus as in Leeds. Whence, then, did he derive his deep impression, so pronouncedly avowed and so sternly acted on, that Leeds Methodism was in special need of lessoning? I can only find one clue to this. So early as the year 1803, when the great Revivalist, William Bramwell, was stationed in Leeds, he unfortunately became the nucleus and the head of an ungovernable Revivalist party in the circuit, who insisted on having the plan-making and the arrangements for and of public worship adjusted to their own notions. The judgment of

the Superintendent and his other colleagues—such presidential men as John Barber and Richard Reece—were to be subjected to the will of Bramwell and a couple of domineering Leaders. Barber and Reece were both out-and-out soul-saving Methodist preachers, but they saw clearly whereunto this sort of thing must grow unless it could be kept in check. Reece wrote to Lomas : “If a Revivalist must be supported by one preacher and two leaders in opposition to three preachers and fifty leaders, when he tramples the rules of our society under his feet, and that merely because he is a ‘Revivalist,’ Revivalism will be the ruin of Methodism.” The responsibility of the Superintendent was set at nought, and an *imperium in imperio* established as a sort of rule of the saints, who were above the ordinary rule. When Bramwell left the circuit the captaincy of this assumptive, and sometimes agitating band, devolved upon Mr. Sigston, and when Mr. Bunting was stationed in the circuit, though not being Superintendent, he never came into direct collision with them, yet their pretensions and loose-endedness were most irritating to his sense of order and of pastoral supremacy, especially those of Mr. Sigston, whose pedagogic airs and theologic crudities were intensely distasteful to the mind of Mr. Bunting.

The same party was striving for the mastery in Sheffield, under men of equal social prominence, where Bramwell had also laboured, and at Halifax in a less obtrusive form.

So when the organ question started up Mr. Bunting felt : Now is the time for teaching Yorkshire Methodists the lesson of submission they so much need. Thus Leeds had the dire misfortune of being chosen as the battle-field between pastoral supremacy and popular revivalism. The trustees succeeded in persuading the most influential ministers that the opposition to the organ was a factious obstruction which ought to be put down. Hence the summary setting aside by Conference of the Connexional law of organs. Hence, too, the determination not to conciliate the antagonists. Hence the resort to the extreme and perilous expedient of “The Special District Meeting,” the speciality of which should be sacredly conserved. Hence the introduction of unauthorised elements into the composition of the Court, especially of the most indomitable will and the most irresistible tongue in the whole Connexion. Hence the practical oblivion—so far as can be made out by the accounts on both sides, and by the Conference discussions on the subject—of the primary



purpose of the Special District Meeting, namely : "the *settlement* of disputes." It was originally constituted much more as a court of arbitration and conciliation and pacification, than as a court of judicature.

Hence, above all, the view which Mr. Bunting took of the affair from the beginning, and which from the Chair of the Conference he avowed to have been his working hypothesis throughout, namely : that it was "an insurrection against the pastoral office." On this ground he justified the admittedly excessive dealing with the case, the chief responsibility for which he so honestly and manfully took upon himself. But that it only became such at a very advanced and aggravated stage of the contention is absolutely clear. At the first, the ministers, leaders, and local preachers were in perfect harmony. Their appeal to the District Meeting, composed wholly of ministers, was precisely what the law ordained. It is only fair to remember that it was the organ party, not the anti-organists, who took the initiative in disregarding law. Now it is not unlikely that Mr. Sigston and his immediate following were not indisposed to a conflict with the Conference, but they had been kept in check for twenty years, and with the great mass of the objectors it was not so. To forthwith regard a movement as an insurrection against the pastoral office is the surest and the quickest way to make it such.

It is an interesting fact that the very first debate which proved the voice of Jabez Bunting to be a potent voice in Conference was that upon the innovation of introducing an organ into a Methodist Chapel in Liverpool. He took the side of the organ in the face of a powerful opposition. It is also to be noted that the question had first been discussed in the Quarterly Meeting with the result of a majority against the organ.

On the opening of the Conference of 1829 Mr. Bunting raised himself greatly in the estimate of his brethren by showing that he was not incapable of confessing himself to have been in the wrong. He evidently expected some reservation in the vote of thanks to him as the retiring President, so when an unmodified and unanimous vote of thanks was passed he said :—

"I feel perfectly at a loss for words to express my gratitude ; I did not discharge my duties at the last Conference as I know I ought to have done. If I have given unnecessary pain last Conference, I am sorry. I am not what I ought to be ; but such as I am, I am in body, soul, and spirit, a *Methodist* and a *Methodist Preacher*, the grateful servant of the Conference. I cannot trust myself to tell my grateful regards for this vote."

Everybody knew how true this was, and that the only possible reference of his confession was to his unfortunate habit of saying "bitter things" and of side-taking in the Chair and sinking the President in the pleader, the Moderator in the advocate. This speech won upon the brethren greatly.

The Leeds Case continued to agitate the Connexion during the whole of Mr. Bunting's second Presidency (1828-29), and formed the chief subject of discussion in the Conference of the latter year. A number of addresses to the Conference, which were in reality what Mr. Entwisle called them, "remonstrances" against the action of the Conference of 1828 with regard to the dispute at Leeds, were received by that body from several of our largest and most influential societies. The first to be considered was that from the circuit in whose principal chapel the Conference was being held, the powerful Methodist Society of Sheffield.

The Quarterly Meeting of that society, in bluntest Yorkshire fashion, complained of the decision as unconstitutional and unfair.

Mr. Henshaw, Superintendent of the Circuit and Chairman of the District, a man of considerable culture, said: "When I came into the Circuit I found it (1828) in a state of great excitement, and the *majority* in an agitated state, requiring *kindness, prudence, and conciliation in order to produce love and harmony*. But the town was flooded with pamphlets opposed to the decision of Conference. By an act of authority I dissolved the Quarterly Meeting, as I objected to its discussion of the Leeds affairs. At a subsequent meeting they expressed their fears that the rules of pacification were to be swept away."

Mr. Bridgeman, another Sheffield minister, said: "I would inquire if a member of a Quarterly Meeting thinks that the 'Rules of Pacification' have been violated, he has not a right to express it?"

Mr. Bunting: "Yes, certainly, in his own Circuit."

The next remonstrance read was the "Resolutions of the Southwark Quarterly Meeting."

Mr. Bunting: "The Southwark Resolutions are of such a character that what we have to do on the case is—to know whether the brethren (ministers) have done what they could to prevent the meetings."

Mr. Treffry, the Superintendent of the Circuit, said: "Great dissensions prevailed in the Circuit about the decision of the Conference on the Leeds Case. At the Quarterly Meeting great preparations were made to deal one decisive blow. The Minute of Conference was called for. Mr. Farmer read it. Mr. Spicer read a reply to the Conference letter. Mr. (Dr.) Dixon spoke with most gracious effect. To divert the stream of discussion, Mr. Farmer said: 'I will give £50 to meet the requirements of the Circuit if we may go on with our regular business.' I told the meeting I had rather five hundred members were lost to the Circuit than that document should go forth. The ground of the remonstrance was that 'Conference had maligned them and they had no other way of redress open.' At the beginning of the year not

five persons in the Circuit would vindicate the Conference, and now not twenty speak against it."

Mr. McNicoll said: "We had differed in our *modus* of settling matters. They knew we were somewhat divided in our manner. They noted our silence—on my part hopelessness of success. At the Leaders' Meeting, when the question was introduced, I told them that the matter had no business there. I seized the opportunity of going to prayer and was reproved for so doing. I was sorry that Mr. Dixon had not spoken earlier, as he was so eloquent, and had some influence on that body. I felt a difficulty of saying a word even to a junior. We should be careful to move men out of office as soon as possible, lest it generate in the rank and rampant passions of tyrants and Radicals together. We should not feed those passions, but tame them. Grant one concession, and half a dozen others must follow, for they are all pending together. I have been blamed for not publishing, but I had ploughed with that heifer before. I published some time ago and lost. I think that Mr. Watson's reply was too lofty for them and too *stilted*."

Mr. Dixon: "I crave a candid hearing. My appointment to Southwark is among the misfortunes of my life. Had I foreseen the events, no consideration could have moved me to go. I had met with the (Southwark) Address, and read it with care, and it had made a deeper impression on my mind than anything I had previously read. I wrote to Grindrod, Watson, and Atherton, to ask whether I could consent to go to the Southwark Circuit, and left myself in their hands. If I ought to go, I would go. I found the difficulties perfectly appalling to anyone. I expected a division. It laid a weight upon my soul. I went to the Quarterly Meeting with fear and prayer. The Quarterly Meeting was such a scene as I had never witnessed. It lasted from 6 to 12. We ministers consulted together what steps to take. I advised to lie upon our oars and stem the torrent and make an impression, until the time for action came. The speech I made has not been represented in a right light as 'milk and water.' I will myself state my views. Treat me frankly, and I will treat you so too. Mr. McNicoll seems to attach importance to our not echoing the denunciation of the resolutions. I will not condescend to touch them. The next thing in the history of our affairs is the signing of the resolutions. I did not know of the meeting which Mr. Treffry held with some persons. The great majority (of those who signed) are not wicked men. I am fond of our laws, but I think it requires a degree of caution to put their principles into effect. I would take the Gospel in preference to the law. *I acted upon the principle of forbearance.* I was not the Superintendent, nor the Second Preacher. Mr. McNicoll should have delivered his speech before mine and taken the ear of the meeting, which disputed for hours, but did not know what it was disputing about. I did not make one reference to one of the great constitutional questions mooted in the Address. We had countless speeches, but could never get at what we were squabbling about. It was nothing but beating the air. I wished we could get hold of anything that Mr. McNicoll might shake to pieces. Their passions were excited. We ministers on many occasions sat like fools. At length I said, 'We can stand it no more. Our forbearance has done good, but we shall bear it no longer.' Mr. Treffry said he would hear no more against the Conference. I said: 'Let them say what they please, I will become the champion of the Conference.' I never dissuaded Mr. Treffry from

advising with others, but said I did not see the use of it. I said : 'Let us do our best and leave ourselves to truth and to Conference, and mind the sentiment of Scott : "I dare not do this or that, I am above or below it."' I believe the Southwark Address is schism—a breach of piety, and love, and honour. I believe our people (in Southwark) have broken the common, if not the statute law. As to the effect of the proceedings our real enemies are separated from the great body of our people, who talk as if they had nothing to do with the matter. They are tired and disgusted with it. At a late Leaders' Meeting in Southwark one began about something as usual, but the Radicals were opposed by your friends, who drove them into a corner. Another practical consequence is that it has led to the making the South London Circuit into two circuits. Thus the neck of the evil is broken. It is quite practicable for any preacher to govern either of them. But I think we should mix up as little of Brother Slater's rhetoric as possible. I, for one, tell you I shall never shrink from the part I took in the business. The principles upon which it was grounded are my Methodist politics. I will repeat what Lord Grey said : 'I will stand or fall by my own order.'"

This deliverance is all the more interesting as being the first recorded speech which Dr. Dixon ever made in Conference. It is highly characteristic, and it sets forth the principles on which he acted in all subsequent and still more terrible disturbances. His principles were his policy. His guiding rule was simply this : "I am fond of our laws, but think it requires some degree of caution to put their principles into effect." His policy was throughout "the policy of forbearance." Yet he was throughout faithful to the pastoral brotherhood.

Mr. McNicoll said : "They said 'Mr. Dixon was a mild man, but I was the highest little man they had ever seen.' It is a well-known law as to the passions—'If you wish to allay them, you must not give way to them.' If the Conference has done wrong, do not say so. For a father to say to his child, 'I have done wrong,' shatters the foundation of all paternity. You lose all your dignified character by so saying."

This is a hard saying, yet it is but fair to say that Mr. McNicoll's own children turned out charmingly, and were a grace and honour to their name. I knew them all well. Parental over-strictness is very bad, but over-laxity is worse. The President, however, felt it necessary to "hope that no one would go and misrepresent what Mr. McNicoll had said." The worst misrepresentation evidently being representing him as having seriously meant what he said.

Mr. Bunting : "I think it would have been well in the Southwark ministers to have consulted other brethren—their neighbour's house

was in flames, and their own dwelling was in danger. I wish my remarks to be noted, not as reflecting on the past, but to guard the future. I am not sure that there was a strong and unambiguous statement of our Rules. If a lamb were in the paw of a lion, it would not be quite so quiescent. It would have heard the shepherd's voice, and sprung out of the paw. And now with respect to S—, that determined agent of mischief, they should have administered a solemn rebuke to the man. I am not certain that they ought not to have brought him before the Leaders' Meeting and exercised judgment. I would have declined giving him the Lord's Supper for a month; for who can say I must ask leave to do this? Perhaps the limb was too mortified to be amputated. I think the man who called that meeting in a coffee-house should be subjected to proper discipline. I think it would have been better not to have heard the *Resolutions* in the (Quarterly) Meeting; better not to have appeared in this meeting."

Mr. ex-President Stephens: "Everybody knows that South London is a fruitful ground for Methodism. We have heard of the good effects of forbearance; but what of its injurious effects? A trustee told me that the seat-rents at Southwark Chapel had fallen off at least £50 a year."

Mr. Atherton said: "If the City Road congregation (where ex-President Stephens was Superintendent) were to go back next year as it has the last year or two, it would come to nothing at all."

Mr. Dixon "thought they would not lose a dozen in consequence of the disputes in South London, and in respect to the congregation he saw no declension. To take an entire view of the case, we should look at what results would have followed from a different mode of conduct—certainly a disruption, if not something worse."

Mr. Marsden: "I have calmly and deliberately looked at this business; was present at the close; saw nothing to induce me to think that our people had been injured."

Mr. Bunting rose to order: "That was not said."

Mr. Marsden resumed: "We must use caution with respect to the Separatists."

Mr. Reece: "Some attempts were made in our own Quarterly Meeting (London, Great Queen Street), but we have kept our circuit in harmony and prosperity. In regard to the conduct of the brethren in South London, I believe they have behaved with great discretion in the management of the agitation. If they had not behaved with forbearance, there would have been a division. I think that the spirit and principles of the (Southwark) resolutions could not be too strongly condemned; but I approve the conduct of the brethren in the Circuit."

Mr. Bunting: "I have a great admiration of Mr. Treffry and his colleagues. I am not about to express any very decided opinion—at least, dogmatically; I think, however, they have gone too much on a principle of expediency. There are some points, however, on which, perhaps, they are not to be censured. As to the rule about inviting the Chairman of the District, it would not have dishonoured them to have invited Mr. Reece. I think there is another point to be learnt: we have no cause to regret the decision of the last Conference. How many are the memorials? One from Sheffield, about 'three of the nearest Superintendents.' This is a very impudent address. Maybe Mr. Bridgeman has not taught them good

breeding, maybe he has not taught them rhetoric. Then there is an address from Liverpool and one from Barnsley. We have had but very partial opposition to the decision. I cannot go on Mr. McNicoll's principle. If men have done wrong, I should think it a proper, dignified way to acknowledge it. But our firmness was a very great blessing to the Connexion. I do think that a short Minute should be printed, that we stand to the resolutions of last Conference. Let it be as kind as possible, but as firm as possible. As to the Rochdale people, tell them as dear brethren, God loves them, and we love them for their souls' sake. Commend them to the prayers of Messrs. Slack, etc.; they should expect no letter, nor Liverpool either. Their memorials are non-regular, and cannot be answered at all, whether we be in humour or out of humour, whether we have leisure or have it not."

A committee was appointed, with Watson as its chairman, to consider what should be done with the memorials which had been talked about. It recommended that the loyal memorials from Liverpool South and Barnsley should receive a respectful reply. A verbal reply only should be given to those which did not come through the Quarterly Meetings, but a letter should be sent to Sheffield and Rochdale.

Mr. Moore "wished the letter could be so written as to show our superiority in love, especially to those who had written in a good spirit."

Mr. Bunting: "The Sheffield address was arrogant and presumptuous."

Mr. Scott objected to taking a verbal message to Liverpool North.

Mr. Bunting "thought if the Chairman of the District should name it in the Quarterly Meeting it would be sufficient."

The President said "he would put it to the Conference whether they would rescind the rule not to receive unconstitutional addresses."

A very few seceded from the Southwark Circuit. One family, however, have become standard bearers in Metropolitan Independency, and right worthy men they are, to my own knowledge and that of many a London Methodist. And surely it was much wiser and much nicer and better for all concerned, that they should join the Christian body with whom they were most nearly in agreement, than to persistently disturb and disunite a confraternity of churches with whose system of government they were so little in accord.

The like "policy of forbearance" triumphed gloriously in London West (Great Queen Street), under Richard Reece, and in London East, under Henry Moore; but in London North (City Road), with its five first-class Ministers, the congregation had so dwindled that its case had to be made matter of anxious consideration by the Conference. The chief champions of this pacific policy in Conference were Moore, Reece, Watson, Naylor,

Sutcliffe, Pilter, Joseph Taylor (who had kept quiet the elements of discord in the London Hinde Street Circuit), Isaac, Henshaw, Bridgeman, Treffry, Dixon, Atherton, and Jacob Stanley. Mr. Naylor said that the subject had been introduced at the September Quarterly Meeting in Newcastle-upon-Tyne, but he had since persuaded them to defer the consideration of it till the next June Quarterly Meeting, inasmuch as Conference would not meet before July, and it was useless to discuss and draw up an important document in September to lie idle among the papers of the Secretary of the meeting. There were most important Circuit interests pressing for attention, and they surely had the first claim. Meanwhile the members of the meeting might gain fresh light on the subject, and in any case, would be in a calmer state of mind and more fitted to look dispassionately at the case in its true light and on its solid merits. Things turned out in accordance with Mr. Naylor's happy forecast. The Methodists of canny Newcastle thought there might be "something in that," so they set to work evangelising the population "in the meantime," and by June quarter day "the winter of their discontent was made glorious summer" by a revival of the work of God, and they found something else to talk about and sing about and pray about. Brother Naylor had hit the right nail on the head.

The Rev. John Scott presented the address from the Liverpool North Circuit remonstrating against the decision of the last Conference with regard to Leeds. To prevent the discussion of the matter in the regular Quarterly Meeting, he had called a special meeting of the office-bearers of the circuit for that purpose. He said, "I told them all along I could not put the question. At the close, Dr. Rowland turned up his eyes in great wonderment and said I had taken them by surprise. Some may object to my having refused to allow the discussion of this matter in the regular Quarterly Meeting. I much doubt the constitutionality of irresponsible men mooted questions of this sort in meetings containing a Steward, because he is changeable. I think the Conference the proper place for discussing questions of legislation; I think no father in the Conference will think I could put these resolutions. I chose to act as I have done on my own responsibility."

A memorial or "Address" from the Rochdale Quarterly Meeting, which contained a quotation from Hooker, occasioned an animated and most interesting discussion on Wesleyan Methodist Church Principles.

The Superintendent, B. Slater, stated that before this dispute arose the circuit was in a highly prosperous condition ; heavy debts had been paid off, and the stipend of the ministers raised to an exceptionally high figure. He had published a pamphlet confuting those of the dissentients, but without effect. He had done his best. His colleague, Samuel Dunn, had said if that did not overwhelm the whole, he did not know what would. He had an impression on his mind that the opposers of Conference were open to friendly remark, but found that this only applied to financial points. "I think," he said, "I had a majority, but some who are not in the habit of attending the Quarterly Meeting voted for the Address, and we had a slight majority against us."

Then came Samuel Dunn's first speech made in Conference.

Mr. Fowler writes :—"Dunn spoke admirably. He says he is an admirer of our constitution, but that some of the supporters of the Rochdale Address are amongst our warmest friends. All is plain and amiable. They have committed one mistake, but are all in good temper, and never allow any man in any meeting to discover any bad temper."

Mr. Pilter said he could confirm this, and testified to the amiableness of the persons alluded to, and gave a remarkable instance of the generosity of one of them.

Mr. Bunting : "It was an odd thing that Mr. Slater should suppose for one moment that the judicial acts of Conference should come under the consideration of a Quarterly Meeting. Are we to have one great trial and then 320 others? I think that some decision as to what may or may not be put should be come to."

Mr. Scott thought "that something should be said in the Minutes to justify the conduct of those who had refused to allow discussion in the Quarterly Meeting."

Mr. Joseph Taylor doubted whether the plan suggested by Mr. Scott, etc., would be of any service. He thought that Mr. Scott had done all that was practicable in Liverpool, and Mr. Slater had described the good feeling of Rochdale. He thought that anything inserted in the Minutes might awaken angry feeling. The preachers in their circuits could do all that was necessary.

Mr. Newton was against publishing anything in the Minutes.

I. The Remonstrants maintained that by Methodist law, the admissibility of the application for an organ was conditional upon the sanction of the District Meeting. Yet not only had some of the Brunswick trustees been allowed to make direct application to Conference, as if the Organ Law of 1820 had never been passed, but their application had been granted against the earnest advice of the ministers, the leaders, and the local preachers of the circuit. They held that by this action the Conference had nullified the existing Organ Law, and acted upon an expressly superseded regulation.

II. They complained that the rule in the Plan of Pacification



which defines and determines the composition of the judicial court called the Special District Meeting had been departed from, both by substitution and by the addition of unauthorised elements. The law expressly limited the choice of the chairman. Yet so far from keeping within the limits of the law, he had not even confined himself to the ample range of the five contiguous Yorkshire Districts, Halifax, Bradford, York, Sheffield, and Hull, which were as rich in trusty and experienced Superintendents as any part of the Connexion. Circuits, and therefore Superintendents, were more thick upon the ground there than in any other part of the Connexion. Yet not one of the three was taken from any one of the conterminous districts, but men more to his mind were fetched from further afield. In no admissible license of language, they maintained, could the Liverpool Superintendent be reckoned amongst the nearest Superintendents when, on his way to Leeds, he must pass through many circuit towns with most competent Superintendents.

III. They complained that the President as well as the Chairman had taken an unwarrantable liberty with the constitution of the Special District Meeting by bringing into it a predominating factor altogether unwarranted by the Constitution.

Mr. Isaac thought that we must act with great calmness, and affection, and firmness. The admission of members belongs to the ministers. Never did the Apostles ask if they might baptise. Our rules provide a great number of checks against the undue exercise of this power. He thought it might be presumption in him to speak, but if we could get into the way of viewing our power in a more Scriptural light it would be well. He maintained that the true Methodist minister combines the functions of the evangelist, the teacher, and the *overseer*, and that spreading the Gospel is as essential to the fulfilment of our commission as are teaching and ruling. He held that the Apostles were "itinerant," and that "the work of an evangelist" formed a large and an essential part of the duty and the dignity of such men as Timothy and Titus and also of the Methodist ministers. "Unhappily," he said, "the primitive order has been inverted in the course of church history, and the governing side of the pastoral office has usurped precedence of the evangelising and teaching side."

Mr. Isaac's speech went to the very core of the Providential Mission of Methodism.

Mr. Bunting was happy to agree with Mr. Isaac to a considerable extent. Dr. Bunting's points were, that "so long as the rightful authority of the Pastorate is secured, all other ecclesiastical arrangements are mainly matters of discretion." He strongly maintained, however, that "no part of the pastoral authority is committed to the Class Leaders." Mr. Moore said: "We are

movable ministers. I can never allow Methodism to be voted away. We must not go against our own rules, even to break up a nest of hornets. I think we are evangelists, and come nearer to that than any other office."

Dr. Bunting "thinks all churches have power to adapt their government. Mr. Wesley did exercise virtually an apostolic government, but it is not necessary for us to do so. I do not think we can be proved to be evangelists. Our proper office is *pastors and teachers*. Always conscientiously refuse to make a man a class leader who desires to be one. No leader has the government over his classes. I believe that we are teachers to instruct and pastors to *govern* our people." Mr. Isaac: "With respect to leaders, who will deny that they have the *care* of their classes?"

Mr. Bunting replied: "I have an objection to applying the word *pastors* to leaders: the Holy Ghost has *seized* upon the word, and as it were *monopolised* the term. We ought not to employ it in an etymological, but in an *ecclesiastical* sense." He referred to Mr. Bradburn in Liverpool disclaiming the pastoral office, and he read a Minute from the Journals giving directions for the conduct of Leaders' Meetings. He alluded to a Resolution from the Quarterly Meeting in Liverpool. He should strongly have objected to anything being put to the vote relating to the Leeds matter. The meeting of friends which Mr. Wood and Mr. Scott had called had been of service, but he should have objected to them if anything had been put to the vote. "There must not come a time when we are to hear all the nonsensical memorials which some two or three queer individuals may get up in a meeting. Brother Slater has erred in mistaking the law, and in thinking you could conquer the Radicals. He went with them one mile, and the devil compelled him to go with them twain, The Rochdale devil has conquered."

Mr. Taylor "deprecated the publishing of anything in the Minutes which might serve to keep the subject still lingering before our people's mind, who had had too much of it, and this would certainly be the result if one man's treatment of the difficulty in one circuit were expressly praised to the implied disparagement of another man's treatment of the difficulty in another circuit. Mr. Scott has done all that was practicable in Liverpool, and Mr. Slater had brought Rochdale back to a state of good feeling. All that is necessary is for each minister to do his best to keep the peace in his own circuit."

The debate was here interrupted by the "Stations."

The necessity of the strongest possible appointment to the London (City Road) Circuit in its depressed and declining state was the subject of a very anxious and prolonged discussion, introduced by an earnest petition from the Circuit Stewards. The prevalent opinion was that Mr. Watson was the fittest man.

Mr. Watson: "Being the subject of personal debate is very painful to my feelings. I am the servant of the body. My strong prejudices are in favour of Birmingham as a station of public usefulness, and I think it would be wrong to interfere with my engagement."

The President was proposed as suitable for the Superintendency of London First, but he alleged his incompetency for the situation.

Mr. Bunting: "Considering the connection between the North London and Southwark, its claims are stronger than those of Birmingham. Never has there been such an opposition by men in our Society as there is now in London. Southwark is in actual rebellion." He spoke in favour of the course pursued by the City Road preachers. "On public grounds Mr Watson ought to be appointed to London First."

Mr. Entwisle "believed that the going to Birmingham instead of London would add years to Mr. Watson's life."

"After a very long debate," as Mr. Jackson says ("Life of Mr. Watson"), Mr. Fowler demanded a vote—the first that had ever been taken in Conference on a question of stations. It was announced from the Chair that London First had won the day by one vote. Mr. Fowler was always of opinion that the refusal to send Mr. Watson to Birmingham, in accordance with the invitation which he had accepted, was for many years most prejudicial to Methodism in Birmingham.

On the resumption of the debate on Memorials these Quarterly Meeting remonstrances were pronounced unpermissible on the ground that the Quarterly Meeting has no constitutional right to review the judicial acts of Conference, although it new legislative or regulative acts come within the rightful cognisance of the Circuit Quarterly Meetings. This distinction seems quite fair, and has, I believe, been acted on from that day to this: a point well settled. But inasmuch as these remonstrances referred to an alleged infringement of that Connexional Bill of Rights, the Plan of Pacification with its admirable outrider and completion—the Leeds Regulations of 1797—these Quarterly Meeting addresses to the Conference were wisely no denied a hearing.

The discussion was continued by Mr. H. Ranson, who, "having a conviction that something might be done, had been induced to speak at Stockton Quarterly Meeting. The question was introduced, and every man thought he had a right to say what he pleased touching the resolution of Conference. Because I refused to put a resolution some have declined attending the Quarterly Meeting." The Liverpool South Circuit "pressed upon the Conference a digest of our laws."

Mr. Bunting: "They do not mean what Dr. Warren would have done but a book which would make that *law* which is now *usage*, and that *certain* which is now *disputed*. But the very first thing must be to define a Quarterly Meeting, and this would be as dangerous as the proposal made in a parish meeting for making a new Lord's Prayer and mending the Ten Commandments."

The entry in the published Minutes came under the head of *Discipline of the Connexion*. The Conference announced "its *fixed resolution to uphold the Rules of the Plan of Pacification, as explained by the action of the Special District Meeting at Leeds.*" But the addresses argued : The Special District Meeting at Leeds was in its very composition "a violation of those very rules." "A violation of a constitutional document," it was further argued by one of the contracting parties, "was pronounced to be henceforth the *authoritative explanation* of that document, and the 'explanation' is to over-ride the rule—thus the Plan of Pacification becomes an irritating and divisive document."

The contention of the London Methodists was that the "explanation" of the discipline was in reality a change in that discipline. They applied for the rescinding of the decision on the Leeds Case as reported in the Minutes for 1828, and for a printed declaration that the Leeds Special District Meeting in 1827 should not be taken as a precedent for any future Special District Meeting.

The points raised are these : (1) What was "the very extraordinary emergency" which rendered constitutional a court which would otherwise have been admittedly unconstitutional? The Special District Meeting, as defined by the Leeds Conference of 1797, was itself the *constitutional* provision for any such very extraordinary emergencies, and was never to be resorted to but in the case of such emergencies—namely for "settling disputes amongst the members of the societies or between the preachers and the people which cannot be settled in the ordinary District Meeting." Hence arose question (2) What constitutes the constitutionality of any court or of any mode of procedure involving the very membership of official and of private members? The Articles of Pacification agreed to in 1795 and completed by the Leeds Regulations of 1797 effected that adjustment of the mutual rights and relations of the Methodist Preachers and the Methodist people, rendered necessary by the death of Wesley, and had been agreed to by both parties as a sacred settlement, not to be "explained" into something diverse or divergent by either on party or the other, but to be loyally adhered to by both parties a the documentary constitution. It was mutually binding, but if the temporary Chairman of a District and President of the Conference might set this aside, of what use was it?

Mr. Bunting said : "These loose memorials do not come into court with clean hands; they have appealed unto Cæsar" (the public).

Mr. Watson: "One object in replying to the addresses is to tell Rochdale that they did wrong in suffering these matters to come into the Quarterly Meeting."

Mr. Bunting: "If an answer be given to Rochdale, it must be rebuke."

Mr. Newton "would either have an answer in writing or no answer at all."

It was agreed that the Chairman of the District (Mr. Newton) should state to the (North) Liverpool Quarterly Meeting the approbation of Conference of Mr. Scott's conduct.

When Mr. Bunting's resolution to the effect that the Conference will maintain the rules of the Plan of Pacification, "*as explained by the action of the Special District Meeting at Leeds*," was carried, Mr. Bunting said: "Let it be known that no man can vote for this who thinks that Special District Meetings are contrary to our rule."

Mr. Bridgeman strongly objected to Mr. Bunting's attempt to construe objections to the Leeds Special District Meeting into objections to the Special District Meeting as defined by the Plan of Pacification. This was construed into a reflection upon the action of the last Conference; and he was called to order. Mr. Moore took Bridgeman's side.

Mr. Bunting "thought that it was competent to Mr. Bridgeman to move that the acts of the last Conference be rescinded. But we were then proved innocent, and it is unbecoming in Mr. Moore to mutter that we are 'guilty.' It is a judicial case, and the matter has been adjudged."

Mr. Bridgeman explained to the satisfaction of many of the brethren that the only point on which he differed was the *composition* of the Special District Meeting held in Leeds, not the exercise of the power to call the Special District Meeting, as defined in the Leeds Regulations of 1797.

Mr. Dixon did "not approve a resolution representing all who disapproved it as actuated by factious motives. He thought it better to say nothing about motives in legislative documents."

Mr. J— "would not eat with the men who signed the Southwark document."

Mr. Moore "had not crossed the Thames these two years. But he thought that Mr. J.'s way was not the best way to put down wrong feeling."

Mr. Dixon "thought a body should avoid all altercation with its members. He would not send any reply to letters which could not be answered without involving this."

Mr. Watson "had no objection to soften down the reply to South London Address."

Mr. Jacob Stanley asked: "If any softening down could be made in the phraseology, why should anyone object to it?"

Mr. Bunting said: "There is a call for unanimity. Last year the Southwark dissentients would not give up, but sent forth a document to the Connection, to all the world, which affixed as great a stigma as they could attach

to our character. If they love it now, let them speak for it. It is their turn to give up."

Mr. Sutcliffe "had at the last Conference strongly objected to the treatment of the Leeds Case, and had suffered for it."

Messrs. Mason, Edmonson, Moore, Reece, and Newton spoke highly of Mr. Sutcliffe's character and services. Some alteration was made in the phraseology of the Resolution. Suitable men were selected to write the answers to the Addresses. These were also read, amended, and adopted.

The smooth-penned Robert Wood drew up an answer to the Sheffield Address, which, after all, was decided to be answered. When read over, it was thought too long; but Mr. Bunting thought it would answer the purpose. Mr. Henshaw, the Superintendent, "would inquire if this reply might be a subject of discussion at the Quarterly Meeting." Answer—"No, no"; but the subject is to come up again to-morrow morning.

"The Leeds Case," which had occupied the Conference of 1828 for a whole week, was allowed four days' consideration in the resolving and the discussing of the addresses and the replies. These "Addresses" were, as Dr. Dixon phrased it, "requisitions," "requirements after examination." These Remonstrances were on practical, tangible, and substantive points. They were fundamentally the same as those of the minority in Conference—an expression of regret that the Organ Law of 1820 should have been enacted, if it had not been intended to be acted on; and that the Conference had disregarded its own rule as taken in its natural and straightforward sense, etc.

Some of the Addresses touched on Church Polity and Church Principles, quoting Hooker as well as the "Plan of Pacification" and the "Minutes of Conference." The most extreme of these was the South London Manifesto, which, as Mr. McNicoll said, "made a preposterous attempt to graft Congregationalism upon Connexionalism." The pacification of South London Methodism was a signal triumph of the policy of love. The South Londoners were fiercer than the men of Leeds. Their irregular meetings were more defiant, and, as Richard Watson showed, the extremest of the Leeds positions were not taken up until South London had taken the initiative. Yet such was the benignant policy of the course pursued by the Treffrys, father and son, and

by the eloquent James Dixon, with the advice of Richard Reece and Richard Watson, that only a literal handful of members—five—were lost in South London, but more than a thousand in Leeds!

On the matter of *legality*, the Address from the Quarterly Meeting of the Liverpool South Circuit as explained, on presenting it, by Mr. Newton, Secretary of the Conference and Superintendent of the Memorialising Circuit, and by Dr. Bunting, was shown to be of very great significance. It "pressed on" the Conference "a Digest of Rules to be printed as soon as possible." The reason of this urgency, and what they meant by a digest, was—to enable them to reply, as they were now at a loss to do, to the charges of illegality brought by the dissentients against the treatment of the Leeds Case; for example, by stating what it was that made "the emergency" at Leeds so "very extraordinary" as to render it "constitutional," and the obliging a leader to say, in writing or upon his word of honour, that he would vote in one particular direction. They craved that all "ambiguity" which might prove a stumbling-block to loyal and leal-hearted people, should be cleared out of the way, as Dr. Bunting put it, "that that should be made certain, which is now disputed." Dr. Bunting counselled that the Conference "had better not meddle with it, and thought he had said enough to show the delicacy of the matter."

So the Digest was not issued, and that which Dr. Bunting said would have to be the first thing done—the definition of the Quarterly Meeting—was not accomplished until 1852, after the terrible convulsion of the Connexion, as a concession to a mass of memorials to that intent.

As to the benightedness of our people at that time, on the subject of their own rights and powers, Mr. T. P. Bunting says: "It is almost amusing to note how ignorant these Leeds dissentients were of their real rights." ("Life of Bunting," p. 594.) He then shows how easily they might, by availing themselves of their rights under the Plan of Pacification, have not only *outmoved* the Superintendent, but *have moved him out* of the Circuit until Conference.

#### CONFERENCE OF 1830.

The Leeds Conference of 1830 met amidst political upheavals and undulations, and amidst the mutterings of a still unhushed

church-storm. The first act of the constituted Conference was to move and prepare a loyal address to William IV., who had ascended the throne a month before. The Wellington Cabinet had resigned rather than entertain a measure for Parliamentary Reform, and the country was in the throes of the General Election on that contested issue. Yorkshire was the centre of disturbance, for Henry Brougham was successfully contesting Yorkshire and was canvassing Leeds during the Sessions of the Conference.

A letter was read to Conference from Dr. Cook, of Paris, which described with thrilling and instructive details the *Revolution of the Barricades*, "the glorious three days," which lifted Louis Philippe into the throne of France. Yet under the placid and parental presidency of the benevolent George Morley, "the discussions of the Conference were particularly harmonious; the preachers were never more fully united in judgment and affection." (Smith, VIII., p. 148.) "The deliberations of this Conference were distinguished by the great unanimity and affection which prevailed throughout." Yet some touchy questions had to be disposed of. There was a very unusual number of disciplinary cases, but happily not one expulsion, and but one suspension for a year.

The most significant and interesting case was that of the eloquent poet-preacher, Joshua Marsden, a veritable man of genius. A charge of "*intemperate administration*" was brought against this popular and able brother. Presidential interference had been required by friends at Northampton and invited by Mr. Marsden, who was both Superintendent of the Circuit and Chairman of the District. The President had met the preachers and the parties concerned. The Superintendent "uttered violent invectives, and very unjustifiable language was indulged in on both sides." They threatened to go to law. It was proposed that Mr. Marsden should read from the pulpit an acknowledgment that he had done wrong. This he *did* on the Sunday evening. Mr. J. Marsden was heard in explanation.

He admitted that "he perhaps did wrong." The Northampton Society had been in a state of most painful excitement, and great difficulty was found in obtaining accommodation for the preachers at the District Meeting. It was shown that there had been great misrule.

Mr. Watson said: "It struck him that the people in Northampton were not disaffected. There had been some irregularity, but the Superintendent's disciplinary conscience had not been affected by that till an insignificant affair



fell out. Mr. Marsden had been guilty of *an intemperate exercise of authority*—He expressed “a hope that Marsden will learn an important lesson from the affair. If he persist he will disqualify himself for the office of Superintendent

The nearest approach to a passage of arms occurred when inquiry was made as to the fulfilment of a pledge given by Mr. Jones to recall a book which he had published. In this tractate he had made a huge, unskilful effort to reconcile foreknowledge with freewill. In the eagerness of his philosophical floundering he had stranded on the boulders of unscriptural dogma. But on this being pointed out to him he had loyally undertaken to suppress the book, so far as it lay, and finding that the rights of his publishers were in his way, he had published “a satisfactory refutation of his own errors.”

Mr. Bromley took occasion to remark: “Nothing of this question was known till I had the misfortune to be busied in the subject. I do not believe in the doctrine of Mr. Jones’s book. I have published a book on the subject myself.” He threw out a loose hypothesis as to the bindingness of our doctrinal standards, which, if adopted, would reduce our standards into scarecrows.”

Mr. Watson thereupon remarked: “I think a man may entertain peculiar views of a metaphysical nature without harm; but I think it serious when a man rises up in this body and makes an offensive attack upon our standards—I think it is most indecorous. I am sorry to use such an expression to a man so much esteemed as Mr. Bromley, but it is wrong from me by a sense of duty. The doctrine of *unsuccessive duration* is not a theological doctrine at all, nor vitally connected with the Divine Prescience. If Mr. Bromley objects to subscribe to our standards, he ought to be brought to explain. I cannot envy the feelings of a man who looks with indifference on the honour of our ministerial body with regard to our doctrinal pledges.”

Mr. V. Ward “was sorry to hear what Mr. Bromley had said. He thought it a bad symptom to be indifferent about our doctrinal teaching. He was sorry that Mr. Bromley had obtruded his book upon the Conference.”

Another speciality of this Conference was the initiation of what has become an essential and a most important part of Conference proceedings: “the *conversation on the state of the Work of God.*” It began by an impromptu suggestion from George Marsden, that as they were well on with business, and there had been reported a much smaller increase than usual—1,060—it involved a call to great searchings of heart.

Mr. R. Wood read a letter from his father, the Rev. James Wood, which Mr. Fowler says was “worthy of the piety and talents of the venerable man.”

Mr. Moore was called upon. He said : " We should visit the Society, so as to see all was right. We must look after the leaders. One great cause of the success of slander is that souls are not cared for. Mr. Wesley's Works should be diffused more among the Connexion. Every leader is a pastor of his class ; if we do not look after the Society, how can we expect the leaders to look after their classes ? "

Mr. Lessey " thought the principles laid down by Mr. Moore were essential and vital to our constitution. In meeting the leaders he found it very useful to address them on the duties of their office. He concurred with Mr. Moore that we must personally look after the people. Preach as we will that will not meet our case. He objected to the distinction between a *pulpit man* and a *pastoral man*. Every Methodist preacher ought to be both. Many ministers with very little pulpit power are wonderfully useful by dint of pastoral visitation. My dying father's last words to me were : ' What the people want is *powerful*, affectionate preaching and constant attention to pastoral duties. ' "

The most striking occurrence in this Conference was the reception of a remonstrance from the Second London Circuit (Great Queen Street) against the interpretation given to the Plan of Pacification in the Minutes of the foregoing Conference.

Does not all this tend to show that in pastoral administration everything that wears the semblance or suggestion of a State-stroke should be carefully avoided ?

Neither Reece nor Atherton, the ministers of the Remonstrant Circuit, made any observation on the Memorial from their people, and no one questioned them about it. It was evidently felt that as the Conference was meeting in this very town of Leeds, and protests had been received from Mr. Sigston and another of the dissentient leaders, it would be most unsafe and most unwise to re-open the discussion. The only speech upon the subject was from the sensitive, sagacious lips of Richard Watson, who said :

" He had no fear for Methodism, if our laws were *kept to*, and administered in a *right spirit*, with firmness and with mildness, with strength of law, but not *with warmth of temper*." He showed the salutary and completely successful effect of a soothing, healing system which had been pursued by himself and colleagues in the City Road, London. Prosperity and peace had been the swift result.

The London Address naturally revived the matter of an authorised digest of Wesleyan Methodist law of the sort desired by our people. They evidently used the word " digest " in the sense in which we apply it to the Pandects of Justinian. They did not want a mere skeleton of law but a living organism, which

should show the principles of which our laws are the natural outgrowth, and would supply the answers to opponents and to their own brain-born questionings. But nothing came of the conversation in the shape of *Handbook*. Mr. Bunting was not at the Conference. He was too colossal not to be conspicuous by his absence, especially when questions of polity and discipline arose. The practical answer to the Address from London was the disappearance from the Minutes of the *Resolution on the discipline of the Connexion*. Dr. Smith more than once expresses his decided judgment that it would have been wise in the Conference to have carefully revised and modified their disciplinary laws in 1828 in answer to the request of the people.

Happily, none of the judicial meddlings with the law in 1827 has been followed in any subsequent investigation. of the kind. After the great conflict of 1835 it was felt that to give the minister—the plaintiff in the case—the choice of the three specialising factors in the court, and the defendants none at all, had at least a look of inequality. So the law was most sensibly amended thus: “Two of the Superintendents shall be chosen *by each of the two parties concerned and without restriction as to contiguity*.” The introduction into the meeting of any other “adviser,” either “official” or officious, has been most sensitively safeguarded ever since. No person not expressly included by the wording of the law is admitted without the voted permission of the meeting itself, and the full consent of the defendant, who on his part may balance matters by choosing an adviser of his own. But neither the one nor the other have been allowed either voice or vote, or to disturb proceedings in the least by their movements or their consultations.

In the course of reading the Stations, Mr. Moore related the anecdote of Wesley's complaining to Fletcher that he stayed at home too much, and said “the objection against Mr. Atherton is that he is so much away from home.”

Mr. Leach “was sorry that we had no school for girls.”

Mr. Grindrod said: “Most of our funds are embarrassed. Those who have property should come forward liberally. I have not much private property, but will give my proportion.” Mr. Watson said that our financial difficulties had arisen from calling out preachers incautiously. Who but Mr. Mason could manage such a concern as the Book Room? Many call out for preachers who do not provide for the increased expenses. There is an awful expenditure.

Mr. Watson consented to write a “Life of Wesley.” The relations between the British and the Irish Book Room were readjusted after much discussion.

**Mr.** Mason showed that the Irish brethren had a right to their proper share in the profits of the Book Room. He believed that they had not had their just proportion according to Mr. Wesley's intention.

Mr. Tobias said : " The Irish are not such fools as not to know that they have a claim, but they prefer receiving it as a *gift* from the English brethren."

Mr. Watson called attention to the fact that the *Christian Advocate*, a paper fiercely hostile to the Conference (edited by the son of ex-President Stephens) was supplied with information as to the proceedings of Conference, by some member of the Conference. This he thought was " most disgraceful." All such communications were prohibited. Twenty brethren promised to supply sermons for a volume, the profits of which were to be appropriated to the liquidation of the debts on Scotch chapels. Dr. Newton had collected £1,800 for the same purpose. The subject of " begging expeditions " was also entered into. Stringent directions were laid down as to the dates at which Circuit District Schedules should be forthcoming. A vigorous debate took place as to whether the Chapel Fund Committee should be closed or open to any minister who might be wishful to attend. Bromley and Beaumont, Scott and Lord, spoke mainly in favour of the latter. Their view was carried.

A memorable act of this Conference was the setting apart of a Session to the consideration of one uniform, cheap, and safe Chapel Deed for the whole Connexion. By a unanimous vote, Mr. C. Matthews, the well-known Methodist barrister, was called into the Conference. He referred to the great want of uniformity and precision in the old deeds, and the necessity for a new one in the interests and for the mutual benefit of the preachers and the people, which should be as economical and explicit as possible. He adverted to the expensiveness of the old settlement.

" He referred to the Poll Deed now enrolled which had hung Methodism on the law of the land. He read the paper which he had drawn up and presented to the Solicitor General, who had carefully perused the case, and had not the shadow of a doubt of its validity. One uniform deed was of vast importance ; it will put it out of the power of an unskilled practitioner to get us into difficulties. He had also taken the opinion of two eminent conveyancers of the highest authority. The deed was read."

The details of the scheme for the projected Theological Institution were carefully considered. A remarkable discussion took place with regard to the injury sustained in Manchester, Huddersfield, Wednesbury, Dudley, and elsewhere, so many of our people having joined the *Independent Order of Oddfellows*. This society, which was originally, as its name implied, a convivial confraternity, had only of late years become a Mutual Provident Society, and it still retained in force its primitive usages and

character as a convivial club, and as it was a secret society with secret signs and pass-words, and as some friendly societies had during the Luddite agitation been *foci* of a revolutionary propagandism, through which some of our people had been involved in criminal and fatal enterprises, there was naturally a mis-giving as to their connection with this then but little known fraternity. There had been no uniformity of action amongst the ministers in this matter. Some had, not without considerable success, confined themselves to persuasion, others had resorted to expulsion. Mr. Bromley wished to have produced authority by which membership in such societies had been condemned. No answer was forthcoming.

This Conference sustained and carried on right nobly the opposition which Wesley had himself bequeathed to his faithful followers against "that execrable sum of all villainies, negro slavery." Wesley's tract on slavery had been one of the most effective weapons of the Abolitionists. Watson proposed a series of Resolutions, which were enthusiastically adopted against slavery in any part of the British Empire; and every congregation in Methodism was earnestly exhorted to petition Parliament against it. A copy of these resolutions was forwarded to Wilberforce, whose grateful acknowledgment of the receipt of them was read in Conference. Then began the last determined assault upon, and the utter demolition of this shameful fortress of oppression. Side by side with the great parliamentary advocates of Abolition—Wilberforce, Brougham, Buxton, O'Connell, and Macaulay—its most eloquent and effective champions were the Methodists Watson, Clarke, Dixon, and George Thompson, who began life as an errand boy at the Methodist Mission House, and whom Sir Robert Peel pronounced the greatest orator he had heard.

It will be seen that the first Conference in the fourth decade of this century, the first that has ever been held in Brunswick Chapel, Leeds, was a memorable and effective gathering. Notwithstanding the large number of unusual and important matters which came under its consideration, it occupied but twelve days, four days fewer than its predecessor, yet at no former Conference had so many preachers taken part in the debates.

The Leeds Conference of 1830 gave decent burial to "the Leeds Case" as a chapter in the chronicle of Methodism. It proved to be much less an episode than the opening canto in a mournful epic.

The way in which I became interested in early life in this lamentable matter seems rather curious. As my father was stationed in a Yorkshire circuit at the time, it was the subject of solicitous and eager conversation. In the autumn of 1829 I was the guest of Daniel Isaac, along with my venerable father, and as the former had come to Leeds in the interests of peace and quietness, the talk turned naturally on his prospects of success. I had thus picked up and pieced together some fragmentary details of the case. At the Conference of 1830, along with the other ninety-and-nine Preachers' sons, I was introduced to that imposing conclave. At the close of the service an old Grove lad took me home with him to dinner. He had three ministerial guests, and as the Brunswick organ was then brand new, and to Methodists a phenomenon of magnificence and massiveness, it is not surprising that the youngest brother of the three should be effusive about the grandeur of the instrument. They forgot that "little pitchers may have long ears," or else supposed that the blue-jacketed, corduroy-breeched boy was so absorbed in his first experience of salmon and green peas and hot veal pie, etc., as to be utterly indifferent to Methodist affairs. They as little thought as he did that, sixty-seven years after, he would record as history some part of that day's table talk.

To the enthusiastic exclamations of the youngest minister, the eldest, in terms too forceful and too pungent not to stamp themselves upon my memory, replied on this wise: "Yes, it is a splendid instrument, no doubt, but we paid too dear for our whistle." "No doubt," returned the youngest; "it must have cost a pretty penny, several hundreds, I suppose; perhaps not much less than a thousand pounds." To which the eldest man rejoined with raised hands and eyebrows, "A thousand *pounds*! It cost a thousand Methodists, and more, in this one town of Leeds, besides some hundreds in other parts of the Connexion. I can never hear or see it without thinking of what William Dawson calls it: 'The great dragon, that made one mouthful of a thousand Methodists and more.'"

The master spirit of the Conference, which was marked by the most fraternal freedom of discussion, was Richard Watson, who rose to the full height of his intellectual powers.

This was the only Conference Dr. Bunting ever missed for fifty-four successive years. During forty years he had seemed to be a part of the very definition of the Conference. On the motion of Dr. Clarke, a young minister was granted to

him as an assistant during the ensuing year. It is noteworthy that Mr. Isaac spoke but once throughout the Conference. But he was in a depressed and saddened state of mind and he <sup>art.</sup> Next to Dr. Clarke, he had most strongly disapproved of <sup>the</sup> treatment of the Leeds Organ Case, and had agreed to <sup>be</sup> stationed in Leeds in 1829 in the earnest hope, if not <sup>of</sup> closing, yet of contracting and bridging the chasm which <sup>was</sup> yawning between the old body and the new. But, alas! <sup>he</sup> found the truth of the inspired adage: "A brother offender <sup>is</sup> harder to be won than a strong city." The condition <sup>of</sup> affairs was exactly that which is described by Coleridge in his <sup>powerful</sup> lines, beginning—

"Alas! they had been friends in youth,"

and ending—

"And to be wroth with one we love,  
Doth work like madness in the brain."

The magnanimous remedy prescribed by Richard Watson in 1828 to amend the mistake of 1827 in setting aside the non-sanction of the District Meeting, by persuading the trustees to defer the erection of the organ for a year, and take all possible means to bring the two parties to agreement, had proved too hard a saying. And the whole dispute had been thrown into the melting-pot of worldly politics, and fused in the white heat of passion into a complicated mass. Poor Isaac found himself constrained to carry the war into the seceder's camp in his own caustic, crushing, controversial style. This was a work so alien and so uncongenial that it preyed upon his health and spirits, till his brave and buoyant intellect began to falter and to darken. Before his three years' term in Leeds was over he was taken with paralysis, and though he lingered for a little while, his energetic public life was practically closed.

It is sad to note the effect upon the health of the vigorous and active ministers, who were in the thickest of the fray, which was produced by these disturbances. Mr. Grindrod wisely left the scene of the strife at the end of the first year; but his Obituary states: "He sustained a shock to his health and constitution from which he never recovered." But he served and suffered nobly for a few years longer, and then, after a protracted and painful illness, fell on sleep. Mr. Close, the third minister, also left Leeds at the end of his first year, but I

gathered from his son, a well-known surgeon in the town, that he too traced his fatal malady to these disturbances. He laboured less than five years longer, and died after a highly appreciated ministry of but fifteen years. Mr. Galland stayed in Leeds for his full term, but his health, too, was seriously affected by these conflicts in the Church, and he fell in the midst of his career. Another minister of special power and promise, who had taken a decided part in these contentions, Thomas Bridgman, a preacher and a writer of deserved repute, but just survived their termination; he died in 1832, in the midst of his years and of his labours. For all these were gentle-hearted, gracious men, to whom "judgment was a strange work" and who "hated putting away."

As Mr. T. P. Bunting intimates, there is sufficient reason to believe that Dr. Bunting in his later years "would not have cared to argue for" the legality of his own leading action in the matter. A few years later he felt no slight misgiving as to the wisdom of the course which he had counselled and defended. In 1832, when the disruption in the Derby Circuit was brought before the Conference, after very cautious strictures on the action of the Superintendent, he made this frank and dignified confession: "I ought to be the last person to scrutinise too minutely the administration of others. My impetuosity might have led me to manage much worse." In that one word "impetuosity" Dr. Bunting enunciated the unhappy element in the management of the Leeds Case which wrought such mighty mischief. Had the Derby Case been handled with the same impetuosity, the Connexional disaster would have been at least as melancholy and at least as wide in area. Dr. Bunting greatly blamed the Derby Superintendent for not calling a Special district meeting on the case. But every one who knew the ground well knew that had such a step been taken, a movement, which by prudent policy was restricted to such narrow limits, would have assumed incalculably larger dimensions and a vastly aggravated heat.

The four Derby ministers, John Davis, Aaron Floyd, James Brooke, and George Brown McDonald, were wise enough to keep their own counsel, and to keep the matter in their own hands. True, they had not the initial difficulty which the Leeds ministers had to meet—a disappointed, discomfited, and dissatisfied Society, exasperated by the setting aside of the simple meaning of a Conference law and of the pacificatory provision which that law had created. But the political situation was as far more critical



and adverse as the political temperature of the country in 1831 was higher than was that of 1827. Had Mr. Grindrod, like Mr. Davis, kept his own seat "firm on the box," worked the reins by the skilfulness of his own hands, there would have been no lamentable upset. What Mr. T. P. Bunting well describes "the massiveness of his good sense" would have helped to steer matters. But he encumbered himself with adventitious help. The leaders of the Derby agitation were vastly more attractive personages than was Mr. Sigston. But the agitation was quiet, and so to speak, noiseless management, notwithstanding its contagious fanaticism, confined within a very narrow area.

Mr. Robert Eckett, who had joined our society at Great Queen Street, London, during Mr. Bunting's ministry in that chapel, published a pamphlet in which he strove to show that the treatment of the Leeds Case and others had not been in accordance with the Methodist Settlement in 1795-7. He sent Dr. Bunting a copy of his tractate. The great man wrote to him on the subject, and frankly acknowledged that it was *not*.

When the Centenary Meeting for the West Riding, which contributed to the fund £16,720, was held in Leeds in 1838 I had the honour and the privilege of an invitation to the luncheon given by some gentlemen of the town in the Music Hall. As I had but just passed my eighteenth birthday, I believe I was by years the youngest person there, and am probably the only survivor. The great speech on this occasion was that of Dr. Bunting, and a memorable speech it was. He was in his very finest mood, and radiant with delight and thankfulness at the enthusiastic loyalty to Methodism which had been splendidly displayed. The speech was positively captivating, a noble illustration of the Samsonian riddle: "Out of the strong came forth sweetness." One could but recognise in him who stood before us a man carved out for chieftaincy from a solid marble mass. And yet there were a winsome frankness and simplicity and a confidential and alluring openness in his tone, and look, and bearing which cast a powerful charm upon the listener. On the whole, I never saw and heard him to greater advantage. With a masterly dexterity and daring, and with a marvellous lightness and effectiveness of touch, he alluded to the troubles of ten years ago. His motto might have been:

"Now is the winter of our discontent  
Made glorious summer by this sun of York:

And all the clouds that did obscure our house  
Deep in the bosom of the ocean *buried*."

With amazing consciousness of power and skill he made confession of his own undue indulgence in a party spirit. He quoted one of his own off-hand epigrams which had obtained currency in Parliament—"A man of no party is a man of no principle," and admitted that he had sometimes carried that idea too far. He then spoke most judiciously about the Theological institution of which he was the president.

It is interesting to note that on the reception of an appeal from Mr. Sigston to the Conference, the fact was stated, as an instance of Mr. Sigston's bitter spirit, that his young usher had been summarily dismissed for no other fault than his having expressed disapproval of the proceedings of the "Non-con." party. This young confessor became the distinguished Sir Isaac Holden, M.P.

## CHAPTER IV.

### DR. CLARKE'S IRISH SCHOOLS.—HIS ENFORCED SUPERNUMERARY-SHIP WITHOUT THE COGNISANCE OF CONFERENCE.

AT the Conference of 1831 it was found that the List of Reserve for 1829 was not exhausted, and that for 1830 was as yet untouched. Two men, however, were taken out for Mission work who engaged to go abroad for life.

Mr. Bunting liked a man in whose heart it was to give himself up for unlimited service. He thought we had boasted too much about our church having money but lacking men. Men we had in abundance, but not men of the right sort. Our Missions in the East ought not to have been deserted as they have been by some brethren. He would not wound their feelings, but the feeling which prevailed in 1813-1814 was much lower now. Only the very best young men ought to be taken out; unless we attend to this we are ruined. He thought that, the present company excepted, Irish preachers would be useful in their own country.

The Superintendent of the Wolverhampton Circuit was charged with having built a house on the trust premises at Bilston, without the consent of the trustees. Dr. Bunting said: It was ridiculous to build an ornamental house in such a place. He doubted the fidelity of the District Meeting in the matter. A committee was appointed to investigate the case.

The case was reported of a brother who had been preaching politics. Mr. Burdsall would have the letter strongly worded. Thinks he ought to be rebuked sharply. Mr. Watson thought that a letter should be sent to him, and a special report of his conduct be given at the next Conference.

Mr. Bunting put the matter on its right basis. Mr. Lessey had rested the indictment on the brother's preaching *Radicalism*. Dr. Bunting and the Conference placed it on his having *introduced politics into the pulpit*, politics of any colour whatsoever.

Mr. Ward requested that a young minister should be set apart for one year to raise money for the Scotch chapels. Mr. Bunting thought that Mr. Ward had better have assistance from six young men for two months each. If Mr. McLean or any other man should be appointed he might contract a roving habit. Conference approved of this suggestion.

The Cornwall District Meeting was reproved for having entertained and

passed on to Conference vexatious charges, without the slightest foundation, against a devoted minister.

Mr. Bunting thought that as Mr. James Wood had reached his eightieth year he should take the Conference pulpit at seven o'clock to-morrow morning.

Mr. Atherton complained of the haste with which a motion had been disposed of at the previous session, and of the abusive epithets which had been employed by a Welsh brother and cheered by the platform. A more kindly feeling was induced and the matter ended. The Second London District requested that the London circuits should be placed in one district. Mr. Watson enforced the recommendation, observing that it was desirable that London should be under one administration. The circuits detached from it would form a very good country District. Mr. Sutcliffe asked, "What would become of the poor circuits?" Mr. Thompson objected that "the alteration had not been brought before the Second London District." Mr. Bunting was not satisfied at this doctrine. Could not the Conference alter its own rule without permission from a district meeting? The highest court is not to be controlled by an inferior jurisdiction. A committee was appointed to consider the proposal.

Mr. Bunting: "I think there are persons who will not bustle in a Quarterly Meeting who ought to be regarded—men who will pray more than they will prate." It was nevertheless decided that an application from "a number of respectable persons" for the continuance in a circuit of a minister who had not received the required invitation from the Quarterly Meeting could not be entertained.

Mr. Bunting proposed that "the Deptford Circuit should have an additional minister, his *board only* being paid by the Circuit." The Conference *assented to rather than approved of* this measure.

Mr. J. Farrar complained that the Committee of Privileges had afforded him no redress in a case on which he had applied to them—his being bound to take a parish apprentice.

Mr. Bunting was of opinion "that Mr. Farrar had a right to take a parish apprentice; it was humane law, and what Mr. Farrar made matter of complaint was cause for unfeigned gratitude. The Committee of Privileges had nothing to do; still, it was as well to keep it up, though there was less occasion for it than formerly. He did not expect so much from what we called *liberal* opinions as some did; for I have always seen infidelity as intolerant as popery."

It was asked what was to be done when burial was refused in consequence of baptism being administered by a Methodist preacher. Mr. Bunting "thought it would be well to procure the highest legal judgment."

Mr. Bunting "could not help thinking that a considerable perversion had taken place in reference to the Children's Fund, and that ecclesiastical duty had given way to financial management, and that too few were returned from many circuits; and he would move that a committee be appointed to examine the schedules of circuits."

Mr. Moore announced to the Conference that he "had some valuable documents relating to Mr. Wesley, and intended to publish a 'Life' of him, but must burn some of his papers."

Mr. Bunting was sure that no man needed to be less reminded about *Trusts*

from Mr. Wesley, for they were in his head and in his heart ; and yet there was a trust unfulfilled. Mr. Wesley requested that his papers should be published or be burnt; as his trustees might think proper. Why had this not been done sooner ?

Mr. Moore thought "he could draw a correct likeness of Mr. Wesley. Mr. Watson had done well : he could write well upon a broomstick, and the more knots there were in it the better. He wished all to prosper, but he meant to attempt another likeness."

With regard to the "Supplement to the Hymn Book," Mr. Entwisle said : "Unless we are careful, we shall always be using the 'Supplement,' as we are fond of new things."

Mr. Bunting "was of opinion that this was not a matter of trade. We should be disinterested; must accommodate those who could not afford to buy them at first. There should be no magazine selling or carrying out on the Sabbath. Many of the Sunday-school hymns might be sung by a Socinian, such as 'Blest be the man whose liberal heart.' He had heard that there were what were called Sunday-school Love Feasts. He thought them a great evil. We shall have a sort of Sunday-school religion."

Mr. Bunting "did not wish for a new edition of Fletcher's Works. He did not approve of connecting Mr. Wesley with Fletcher. They were different men, and stood on different ground. Every preacher might be justly required to have a copy of Mr. Wesley's Works."

Mr. Bunting: "I see no great reason for continuing to interchange frequently with America; occasionally may do better. What would the representative have to say, but to assure us of their friendship? The expense is one ground of objection, the inconvenience of removing a preacher from the labours of his circuit another." He alluded to the loss of Bath and Nottingham by the absence of Mr. Reece and Mr. Hannah. He observed that "any attempt to interfere with their discipline would be resented with true Yankee energy." He moved "that a letter be sent expressive of affection, and of the probability of a representative being sent at some future period."

A remarkable discussion which occurred at this Conference requires a short historic explanation. Notwithstanding all the efforts made in the interests of religious education in Ireland a large population in widely extended districts were left totally destitute of either secular or religious education for the young, and a generation was growing up of "Christian savages" as "wild as the untaught Indian's brood." This was deplorably the case in the Protestant County of Derry, especially in that part of it in which Dr. Clarke was born.

Our Irish Missions had twelve schools, managed by a minister resident in London, but what were they in such a tract of country and amongst so many? An earnest Methodist minister, stationed in the North of Ireland, was so distressed at this deplorable and disgraceful state of things, that he wrote a heartrending appeal to Dr. Clarke to use his unrivalled influence

n meeting a necessity which neither Roman Catholics nor Protestants had been able to overtake.

The erudite philanthropist was deeply affected. He at once applied to some wealthy and benevolent friends of his who promptly responded to his eloquent appeal, his most efficient fellow-helpers being a few devout women. His most generous patroness was the Honourable Sophia Ward, aunt of Lord Bangor. Dr. Clarke sent money to the Superintendent of the Coleraine Circuit for the erection of schools and the pay of the masters at Portrush and at Cashel, Co. Derry. He then took an evangelistic tour of examination throughout the neglected districts, of which his Journal gives a most delightful narrative. He founded schools. He was then in his seventy-second year. His next step was to apply to the Irish Conference, held that year in Belfast, to take these schools under their own administration, and that the Superintendent of the Circuit in which a school might be located should be responsible for the management of the schools. This noble offer the Irish brethren accepted with an eager gratitude. (Smith's "Methodism;" Crookshank's "Methodism in Ireland;" the various Lives of Dr. Clarke.) The President and Secretary of the British Conference agreed. So far all went merry as a marriage bell. But at the British Conference of the same year (1831) one of the Missionary Secretaries alluded to the schools established in Ireland by Dr. Clarke, saying that "he thought it anomalous that a member of the Body should be supporting an establishment unauthorised by, and unconnected with, the British Conference." An extract of a letter from Dr. Clarke was read, explaining the whole affair, and especially its connection with the Irish Conference and circuit work. His position was perfectly simple and intelligible. There was an urgently needed philanthropic enterprise undertaken in reply to an affecting appeal from his native neighbourhood; the sad truth of which he had himself verified by the most careful inspection on the spot. The schools were supported by subscriptions raised in Ireland. He thought that they could be most easily and effectively managed on the spot, and be placed under the direction of the Superintendents of the circuits in which they were respectively located; and thus incorporated with the circuit work, the schools were all available for evangelistic services, the teachers being, by preference, Methodist local preachers. This seemed to him a handier arrangement than making them dependent on the struggling

Irish Missions, and under the management of "the Agent of our Missionary Committee," resident in London. Mr. Bunting was "opposed to the principle. If one might do so another also might."

Mr. Bunting "had seen a letter offering (? *consenting*: Clarke certainly was not in the habit of *offering* to open chapels) to open a chapel, if he were helped in educating his poor children in Ireland. He wished that the excellent man, whom we all revere, would throw his influence into the Body, and be one with us. I would propose it in the kindest, mildest way possible. Those who impute to us hostility to Dr. Clarke, impute what is not in our hearts. He is one of the greatest, if not the greatest man in our Body, so he should be the first to observe rule. After all, I do not see how the schools are to be stopped. He must go on, I suppose, and *sell his influence and his visits*, for it comes to this. I should wish for an expression that would prevent any other man from committing such an irregularity."

Another ex-Missionary Secretary thought *the Irish brethren* to blame. They ought to have refused the application of Dr. Clarke. He intimated that they should now transfer the Ulster schools to the British Conference. Dr. Clarke being out of health was not there to defend himself; but this brought to his feet the senior representative of the Irish Conference. The keen-minded, stalwart veteran pointed out the absurd injustice to Dr. Clarke and the Irish Conference; the use of such terms with regard to the six Ulster schools as, "unauthorised," "unconnected," *committed an irregularity*. He demonstrated that they were not less closely, but *more closely*, connected with Methodism by being placed under the control of the Irish Conference, and linked directly with the Irish circuit work, than if they had been placed under the direction of a minister in London. He showed that they stood in no rivalry whatever, and came into no friction whatever with the twelve Mission Schools, that all this had been carefully guarded against, not only by the selection of localities which the English Missionary Committee were confessedly unable to reach, but the salaries of the masters were forbidden to be *higher* than those of the Mission Schools. He showed that the schools had taken hold of the public mind, and (if not interfered with) would be supported by them in the neighbourhood, who were not subscribers to the Mission Schools. As to handing them over to the British Conference, Dr. Clarke must have a voice in that matter; since, though he had generously given them the schools to do the best they could with them in the interests of Irish Methodism, yet he had conveyed no right to hand them over to any other management.

Mr. Lessey regretted the eccentric benevolence of Dr. Clarke. He would support Dr. Bunting's proposition: "That the Conference regrets the irregularity of Dr. Clarke's mode of establishing his schools in Ireland."

This was put, and a few hands were lifted in its favour; but the contrary was not put.

A breezy discussion took place as to the chapel proposed to be built on the boundary between Grosvenor Street and Bridgewater Street Circuits, Manchester, to whether of the two should it belong.

Mr. Bunting said: "As the friends at Grosvenor Street nearly all agree, **it will be most impolitic to oppose them, in my judgment. I wish for a moment to emphasise a passage of Scripture often forgotten in our public capacity. It is this: 'Thou shalt not favour a poor man in his cause'—**meaning that we are not to give way to that feeling which is found in every **well-constituted mind."**

Mr. Lord stated that the ground on which this chapel was to be built was **always understood to be in Bridgewater Street Circuit, and referred to documents in support of the justice and reasonableness of the claim. He made a convincing appeal.**

Mr. Bunting proposed a conciliatory motion: "That Grosvenor Street Circuit should be allowed to build the chapel, and afterwards, in their well-known liberality, cede it to Bridgewater Street."

A brother, it was said, was negotiating with some clergymen to go into the Church.

Mr. Bunting "thought that he should be treated kindly, and that a letter should be sent to him stating that we have heard with pleasure and satisfaction that he is likely to provide for himself. He might do for the Church. There are many places there where he would be useful."

Mr. Bunting said: "I wish the brethren would imitate authors who wrote the preface last, and would give their speech first, and never mind the preface. Biennial appointments will do great good if peaceably promoted; but if men will force themselves upon the people, it will make a democracy in the circuits, specially increasing the power of the Quarterly Meetings. I will move that there be no biennial stations. I have no passion for taking upon myself to say painful things, but would suggest whether it would not be better for Brother ---- to give up the work as an itinerant preacher."

Mr. Bunting said: "The source of all our evils is this incompetent ministry."

Mr. Entwisle said: "Our first duty is to guard the entrance."

Mr. Bunting: "However particular we may be, from a variety of reasons we must be imposed upon. But there should be some alteration in our system. It is necessary to teach a man *how to administer our discipline*. It is monstrous to send a man to superintend over men very much wiser, and perhaps holier than himself."

Mr. Marsden "had objections to an Academy—perhaps not insurmountable."

A committee was appointed to meet during Conference, and to report before its close as to the principles on which the education of probationers for the ministry should be based. Dr. Bunting was the Chairman. He brought in a very sensible and practical report. It recommended that the principal objects should be to teach the young candidates *Methodistical divinity and discipline; the creation and cultivation of a taste for classical knowledge, and at least an elementary acquaintance with it.*

On Mr. Jackson's reappointment to the Editorship, he told the brethren that after six years' experience, he found it impossible to discharge its duties



without assistance. They were such as not to allow him a quarter of an hour a day for outdoor exercise. He was authorised to procure what help he could during the ensuing year.

On the examination of the candidates for ordination, Mr. Bunting "would ask Mr. Horton whether it was his opinion that in all cases persons are entirely sanctified at the same time that they are justified." His answer was satisfactory.

Mr. Bunting: "I think that not less than two hours should be occupied in a service on the Lord's day which is of Divine ordination."

Mr. Entwisle noted the importance of holding society meetings. "I think that would do more good than a long sermon. I am in the habit of studying and preparing for this part of the service, dwelling upon relative duties."

Mr. Bunting, on the question of the reunion of the Worcester and the Bromsgrove Circuits, said: "We must not be deterred by the sturdy opposition of the people, nor regard the mere convenience of the brethren."

At the closing session, Dr. Bunting enunciated a great principle, which, had it been always kept in mind, Methodism would have been saved from immense disturbance and enormous loss of members. "Conference had the power, but must not use it impetuously or arbitrarily. If you wish to keep it, use it sparingly." Here the true statesman spoke.

#### CONFERENCE OF 1832.

The opening session of the Conference of 1832 was rendered memorable by a conversation which requires a brief introductory explanation.

Mr. Fowler's Conference Journal rolls away from the Methodist Conference a reproach which has too long rested on it like a cloud: the having treated the very man who might seem to claim the highest consideration and respect, with a discourtesy and a disregard never shown in any other case, even to "them least esteemed in the church." Not only his devoted family and his admiring intimates, but the steadiest adherents of our Conferential Methodism, confessed a painful feeling that the ministerial brotherhood had dealt hardly, even harshly, with its most distinguished minister. An historian so well informed and so loyal to the Conference as Dr. George Smith has made this record: "At the Conference of 1831, Dr. Clarke was set down as a supernumerary. This was much against his will, and grieved him at his heart." Dr. Smith then makes the best apology he can for Conference action in this matter, but adds, "Yet his case was an extraordinary one, and as such had previously received, and still called for, more than ordinary

indulgence. We cannot but join in the regret which he and his family felt, that some way was not devised for meeting his wishes and saving him from smarting under a sense of unkindness, if not injury." The authorities of Hinde Street had suggested the solution of the difficulty. The only way in which their wishes could be met was by placing him *there* as a supernumerary. The facts, as they came out in Conference, are as follows: In 1828, Dr. Clarke was appointed to the London (Hinde Street) Circuit as an additional minister, receiving nothing from the circuit but a quarterly allowance for travelling expenses, as he resided at some distance in the country. Through successive invitations from the Quarterly Meeting, he continued in the circuit three years, at the end of which the law compelled his appointment to another circuit. The becoming a supernumerary minister never occurred to him or to the brethren in the same district. The law as to ministers becoming supernumerary was as explicit as words could make it: "Let no preacher be stationed as supernumerary without the recommendation of the District Committee, unless, for particular reasons, *the Conference, with his own consent*, judge it proper. The *Rules of the Preachers' Fund* are equally explicit. "No preacher shall be considered as a superannuated preacher, but he who is declared *by the Methodist Conference* incapable of fulfilling the duties of an itinerant preacher."

Accordingly, in the regular *Order and Form of Business* for the Annual Meeting of the District Committee, the question comes in due course, "Whether any minister shall be recommended to the Conference to become a supernumerary." When this question was put to the Second London District in 1831, not a hint was given either by Dr. Clarke or by any of his brethren as to his becoming a supernumerary at the approaching Conference. For, in truth, few men, if any, were working harder than was he. He was taking his regular Sunday work on the Circuit Plan, and on the week-day he was preaching far and near throughout the United Kingdom to immense congregations with his characteristic energy and ardour.

Dr. Clarke could not attend the Conference of 1831; but before the Chairman of his district went to Conference the Doctor, as is usual with ministers who are changing circuits, communicated with him as to his new appointment. Even then the Chairman gave no hint whatever that he thought the Doctor should retire from the active work. Far from

this, he suggested that the Doctor should be attached to the Lambeth Circuit, in the same way that he had been for the last three years to the London (Hinde Street) Circuit. Dr. Clarke said he thought the Hammersmith Circuit would be better, as being nearer to his place of residence. But, to his immense astonishment, he received, a few days later, a letter from his Representative informing him that a strong opinion had been expressed in the Stationing Committee (by whom was not stated) "that it would be better for him to become a supernumerary." To this he answered with what he meant to be, and thought to be, a decided protest against any such harsh and unwarrantable treatment of his case. But the letter being written in Dr. Clarke's own gentle, meek, and self-suppressing style, it was interpreted as equivalent to an acquiescence in the suggestion of the Stationing Committee. As the letter was not forthcoming when applied for by the Conference a year later, it is impossible to judge what ground there might be for a construction the reverse of that intended by the writer. But Dr. Clarke was well aware that the Stationing Committee could not make him supernumerary; so he appealed to Conference direct against a movement so irregular and so adverse to his wishes. This letter of remonstrance he, in accordance with the usage, entrusted to the President, who was no other than his own Representative, whose special duty it was to protect his interests and to represent his wishes to the Conference. Of this communication Dr. Clarke received no acknowledgment whatever. The sequel will come out in the course of the conversation on the subject in the Conference of 1832.

When the vote of thanks to the retiring President was proposed, Dr. Beaumont rose and addressed the Chair, despite persistent and vociferous interruption.

Mr. N— asked: "What right has Dr. Beaumont to attend the Conference?"

Mr. Bunting: "Dr. Beaumont has no right to be *here*, and therefore no right to be *heard*. There must be something wrong with his head and heart."

Dr. Beaumont: "I will not be put down by Mr. Bunting. Mr. Bunting has often indulged in attacks upon me; but no personalities from Mr. Bunting will deter me from my duty."

Dr. Beaumont then went into the case. "He thought that Dr. Clarke had not been used kindly."

Dr. Clarke here made some deprecatory remarks as to pursuing the subject

any further. He alluded to the ravages of the cholera, and said he "must go back to look after his wife and family."

Dr. Beaumont said: "It seems a little inconsistent that Dr. Clarke, who has complained elsewhere, should now wish to smother the matter here. I wish there were a little *more liberty of speaking* in the Conference and *less complaining out of it*. That would be better for the Body."

Dr. Clarke said: "I would not bring the matter before the Conference till I had had a private conversation with the ex-President."

The ex-President rose. Dr. Clarke requested the ex-President to accompany him into a vestry.

Mr. Bunting: "I would have Dr. Clarke requested to come in again."

Dr. Clarke submissively returned to his seat, as the oldest ex-President in the Conference.

Mr. Naylor: "I must charge Dr. Beaumont with violating a rule of Conference. I too think it is well 'if his heart be right.'"

This remark met with the disapproval of Conference, so Mr. N. desisted.

Mr. Bunting: "I meant nothing personal to Mr. Beaumont when I said there must be something wrong upon his head and heart. The exception to the law against coming to Conference without leave is not when a man has a complaint to make, but when an accusation is laid against him."

Dr. Clarke: "I had an objection to be made a supernumerary." He then defended himself against the charge laid against him in his absence, by Mr. Bunting at the last Conference, of having disregarded the rules of Methodism. He added: "I stated in my second letter to my Representative, the then President, that I wished for one year more, that I might complete my half-century of active ministry. There would never have been a Preachers' Fund, in all probability, but for Adam Clarke. I originated that fund; I drew up the rules of the Annuitant Society. I applied to the proper court and got them 'legalised.' I was opposed by Bradburn, who said the people would think we were looking after maintenance, etc., etc. The number who united at its commencement was 75. I have something to say before I die, which I wish to lay before the Conference."

Mr. Watson: "I wish to know whether the request of Dr. Clarke, relative to his desiring to travel one year longer, was laid before the Stationing Committee or the Conference?" Many brethren replied, "No." None said, "Yes."

The ex-President stated "Dr. Clarke's statement to that effect was not explicit." The letter was then asked for, but was not forthcoming.

Dr. Clarke: "I *certainly* said explicitly '*one year*.'"

Dr. Beaumont was proceeding to make some remark, when Mr. ——— "thought him incompetent to take any part in the debate."

Dr. Beaumont expressed his surprise and indignation, and, amid interruption, said: "If I may not speak, of course I shall leave the house."

Dr. Clarke said, "The Conference is omnipotent, but is always merciful. I assure Dr. Beaumont that all would come right."

Mr. Bunting said "the Conference must not be pledged to Dr. Clarke's opinion. I think something will come out of this that is painful to Dr. Beaumont and painful to the Conference."

When the question came on in the regular course of business—"Are there any objections against any of the brethren?"—and the names of the whole body of ministers were read out *seriatim*, with an interrogative intonation, and an authoritative answer returned in each case, the first name to which the assuring "No" was not at once forthcoming was that of Joseph Beaumont. Mr. Bunting said: "I think we should not visit with any degree of severity the mere circumstance of his coming here without leave, but we cannot pass it over. My judgment is offended at the insinuation that it was necessary for some one to come and defend Dr. Clarke from some action, as if there was a tyranny exercised in the Body. That encourages opponents to Methodism. I am displeased at the violence in his manner. We should not take high offence at each other. There was something like vituperation in his speech. I disapprove of his going so directly against the rule. If Brother Beaumont will express that he misunderstood the rule, a very little matter will satisfy the individual who has the honour to address you. I should be glad to shake hands with Dr. Beaumont and have the matter settled."

Dr. Beaumont said: "I beg to apologise for any intemperate warmth with which I may have expressed myself. I was driven to it by what I considered an ungenerous attack. From what Mr. Bunting says, the allegation against me is of no great consequence; and yet, if I had broken one of the most important rules, the sentence could not have been more severe than that which has now been proposed—'a vote of censure.' My youth has evaporated in the service of this Body. (He was in the twentieth year of his ministry.) I confess that I have had a fear of an irresponsible power in some acts in this Body. I did not think that the ex-President would, on his own authority, have suppressed a communication made to the Conference. I beg pardon of Mr. Bunting for having entertained the opinion that he might have had any influence in the matter. I now think more highly of him than ever. I did not come here 'to defend Dr. Clarke,' but to clear up a painful matter which it was necessary, for the credit of the Connexion, to clear up. I did not consider that I had broken the law in coming into Conference with no higher authority than the President's permission to be present at the Conference. But I find I was in error. I appeal to the brethren who have been my Superintendents, whether I am not an upholder of the law?" He protested against being submitted to the solemn censure of the Conference for a mere sin of ignorance.

I can testify that while *my* Superintendent, Dr. Beaumont was a strict upholder of the law.

The ex-President: "I must notice that observation respecting my having concealed Dr. Clarke's letters. I laid the *first* letter before the Stationing Committee, and the second was like unto it."

Mr. Watson: "I am pleased to see a bridge that Dr. Beaumont can come over." Mr. Watson disclaimed all complicity in the suppression of Dr. Clarke's letters to the Conference, which, he said, "is a great charge to bring against anyone. There is a manifest shyness towards me in the members of the Doctor's family."

Dr. Clarke again stated that it was his second letter to the then President

which contained his request to be allowed one other year in circuit work, and this the then President confessed that he had not laid before the Stationing Committee or the Conference, but he declared that he "could have no motive to conceal it." He admitted that he had not entered into the matter at the District Meeting, and that there had been no disability in Dr. Clarke from taking the position in another circuit which he had so effectively filled in Hinde Street, as the Hinde Street Circuit had "written requesting his continuance, if that could be accomplished within the Methodist law."

Dr. Beaumont said: "I am of opinion that the time of the Conference has been well employed in setting a brother right who had kept back from the Conference a communication which had been entrusted to him. I cannot regret what I have done."

When the question came before the Conference in the ordinary course of business: "What supernumeraries apply to be restored to the work?" and Dr. Clarke's name was reached, he rose and said: "You shall never hear another word from me on the subject as long as the world endureth. I am not greatly offended though I was hurt." Here the matter ended—but *not quite*. On the reading of the Stations in the Conference, Dr. Clarke found to his astonishment that, without consulting him, and against the earnest wishes of the Sixth London Circuit—where it had stood through the foregoing year—his name was removed to that of Windsor. He rose and remonstrated against this unexplained transference from the Sixth London to the Windsor Circuit, and showed that by giving to the latter the first claim upon his services, he should be put to great expense and inconvenience, the connection between Pinner, where he lived, and the North-West of London being much closer and more easy than with Windsor.

Dr. Bunting answered: "I feel some objection to deviate from what appears to be the rule of right. I think a man's name should stand in the circuit in which he lives."

Dr. Clarke said no more, and the Secretary read on.

This was passing strange. There was no change of "local habitation" to account for the sudden change of "name." No Connexional rule would have been infringed, or had been infringed, by continuing Dr. Clarke's name in the Sixth London, as he wished. This imaginary "rule of right" was the very truest of technicalities, to all intents and purposes, which could apply to a man in the seventy-third year of his life. Pinner was nearer the North-West of London than to Windsor. It was in Middlesex. Besides, this "rule of right" has been invisible to

Conference in countless cases, not of supernumeraries only, but of ministers in full and stated circuit work. To go no further than this same Sixth London Circuit—from which Dr. Clarke's name was so suddenly removed against the earnestly expressed desire of both the parties, to relieve the sudden and the transient moral qualm of a single member of the Conference—this sacred "rule of right" was, in another case, traversed without scruple by the space of three-and-twenty years. One of the few preachers ever stationed in the Hinde Street Circuit, who stood on the like lofty intellectual and spiritual plane with Dr. Clarke, was W. M. Bunting. But throughout the three years when he was one of the regular ministers at Hinde Street, and the twenty years of his supernumeraryship, he never lived within the circuit under which his name was placed, and Mrs. Bunting's membership was in another circuit; and Dr. Bunting himself for the last nine years of his honoured life had his residence, and he and his family regularly worshipped, outside the circuit under which his name was printed in the Minutes of the Conference. There are not a few such instances to-day.

But what could it matter to Dr. Adam Clarke under what circuit his name might read in the Minutes of the Conference? It mattered a good deal. To take the lowest item, the wealthy London Circuit was as pleased and proud, as it was amply competent, to vote the mighty preacher £50 a year for his travelling expenses, which the poor struggling Windsor Circuit could by no means do, for at that time they were a feeble folk.

But there was another point of greater moment and significance, on both sides of the transaction. The transference of this world-honoured name from London Sixth to Windsor, snapped asunder a very tender and tenacious tie. It bereaved the loving-hearted minister and scholar of the right of attending the monthly London Ministers' Meeting and the Book Committee, which were at that time identical in their members and their date and place of meeting; the one resolving itself into the other, under the same chairman. Thus the poor stranded whale was deprived of the recurrent spray-showers which had proved congenial and refreshing.

It is true that the sainted scholar little complained excepting to his closest friends.

No one who has not enjoyed the privilege of acquaintance with Dr. Clarke's most amiable family, and with some of his very closest friends, can form an adequate conception of the pain

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which this strange handling inflicted on the venerable man. Dr. Beaumont told me that the first time he met Dr. Clarke after the Conference of 1831 at the London Ministers' Meeting and Book Committee, the doctor dined with him in Southwark, where Dr. Beaumont was at that time stationed. Dr. Clarke had not long before heard of the lecture delivered to him in his absence, but with obvious design that it should be repeated to him by his sympathisers, on the duty of great men to set the example of adherence to our rules, and charging him with selling his influence, because he had taken advantage of his popularity to beg from wealthy people on behalf of the education of his poor Irish children. This he not unnaturally connected with the uncivil silence as to his appeal to the Conference, and the suppression of that appeal, and the refusal to allow him to complete his half-century of active work. Dr. Beaumont told me that as they were crossing London Bridge, the brave old man, regardless of the passing throng, burst into tears and sobbed convulsively like one bereaved. Not only was the last twelvemonth of a bright, beneficent career depressed and darkened by an avowedly motiveless injustice, but a fine-hearted Methodist family was saddened and aggrieved. Dr. Clarke's noble daughter, Mrs. Rowley, continued with her mother, as she knew her father wished her, most loyal to John Wesley's Methodism.

The suddenness, the strangeness, the inscrutability of this unprecedented treatment, in connection with its chronological context, led many to associate it with the offence taken at his handing over of the Irish Schools to the Irish Conference. So far as I know he never made an enemy, and the mutual relations of the two great men, in private and in social life, were the kindest and most pleasant possible. It was on the motion of Dr. Clarke that a picked young man had been allowed to Mr. Bunting as an assistant in his circuit work, and during Mr. Bunting's disablement by an accident, Dr. Clarke had taken all Mr. Bunting's public services which were consistent with his own previous engagements. He had also visited him most tenderly, and had given to the Conference a beautiful account of his submission to this unwelcome inactivity. But on matters of *administration*, the older and the younger man were not always of one mind. And the Irishman's presentation to the Irish Conference of schools for Irish children, built, furnished, and supported for the most part by Irish contributions, had seemed to the English Mission House an almost treasonable act.



But, happily, Mr. Fowler's "Journals" of the two Conferences (1831-2) make it as plain as possible that the Conference as a body had not a shadow of suspicion that Dr. Clarke was being made a supernumerary against his own wishes, much less in opposition to his touching, but suppressed, appeals. They were clearly not awake to the fact that he was becoming a supernumerary at all. And it did not come before the Conference either in the regular way, as a recommendation from the District Meeting, or from the Stationing Committee. The name of Adam Clarke does not occur amongst the ministers who are to become supernumeraries. Much discussion was occasioned in the three readings of the Stations on the appointments to several of the London Circuits; yet Dr. Clarke's name is not so much as mentioned. Had the Stationing Committee brought the case of Dr. Clarke before the Conference, as they were absolutely bound to do, in order to his being made a Supernumerary, the whole matter must have come before the Brethren. The idea was started in the Stationing Committee, and the obvious questions would have assuredly been asked.

Mr. V. Ward bore testimony to Dr. Beaumont's excellent character whilst under his superintendency.

Mr. Scott said: "I think if Dr. Beaumont acknowledge that he has broken a law, and throw himself on the kind consideration of the Conference, that should be enough."

Dr. Beaumont: "I have acknowledged and thrown myself on the kind consideration of the Conference."

Mr. Bunting proposed that his acknowledgment be received, and that the President should express to him the regret of the Conference that he had not sooner acknowledged his error, and that advice be given to him from the Chair.

Dr. Beaumont was called up to the President, who addressed him as he had been instructed to do.

In his speeches on this matter Dr. Beaumont put his finger on the weak and perilous spot where danger in the Methodist Body was most imminent. He said: "The power of this Body should be used healthily and constitutionally. I wish there was a little more liberty of speaking at the Conference, and less complaining out of it. I confess that I have had a fear of an irresponsible power in some of the acts of this Body."

A venerable man, five years my senior in the ministry, wrote to me not long ago: "If everyone of us had spoken out in Conference, as Dr. Beaumont did, we should have had no rift in the Methodist lute, no *Fly sheets*, and no disruption in 1849."

A letter from Dr. Beaumont to the Conference, "complaining of unkindness and injustice" in the treatment he had received, was read a few days later to the Conference, but was not remarked upon at all. He felt it as an unkindness to have been subjected—for what was, admittedly, at worst a sin of ignorance, and one for which he had made a full apology and an appeal to the clemency of his brethren—to a penalty which had heretofore been reserved for very grave offences in morals or theology: that of a solemn admonition from the Chair of Conference—a sentence which was always regarded as carrying with it a kind of stigma for the rest of a man's ministerial life. The injustice which he felt, consisted in the contrast between the treatment of his own case and that of the member of the Conference whose unwarrantable conduct he had brought to light. This minister had confessed to having intercepted a communication to the Conference from Dr. Clarke, and thus done that great and good man a grievous injury, and inflicted on him a deep and galling wound; had confessed to the suppression of a document which the Conference had an absolute right to be acquainted with. By this he had not only subjected the Conference itself to an indignity, but also brought it under the discredit and the odium of having treated rudely and wrongfully one of its own most honoured members.

This minister had made no apology, beyond the declaration that he "could have no motive" for his action. Yet to him had been given an unqualified vote of thanks, and the only man who had called attention to his conduct had been sentenced, for that very course, to a grave admonition from the Chair. That this was the real *gravamen* of the admonition was clear from its very terms, namely, that this vindication of the honour of the Conference involved "an attack" upon one of its members.

By an odd coincidence, the next "case of character" was that of *William Griffith*. Dr. Clarke characteristically gave him a very high character, which was doubtless, up to that date, as true to fact as it was honest in conviction; until he allowed himself to be sucked into the maelstrom of political hypothesis and party conflict.

The ex-President expressed a wish to be relieved from preaching the sermon to the Conference, which was part of his official duty, and Dr. Clarke was unanimously requested to take his place. To this, with characteristic cordiality, he at once assented. No doubt he took this opportunity of delivering the "something

to say before he died which he wished to lay before the Conference." Apart from this, however, he did make in Conference a few very characteristic observations. He said: "There is a wide difference between the past and the present state of Methodism. It was glorious when I entered this ministry fifty years ago, but the 'glory now excelleth.'"

It was decided that for seven years after a missionary's return all expenses incurred through infirmities contracted in the mission work should be met by the Mission Fund.

Mr. Bunting warned Dr. Clarke against "the insinuations of false friends. I am glad of his attendance at Conference, and at the manner in which he has submitted to the discipline of the body, in being put down as a supernumerary in the circuit in which he resides; which I think an important principle. I move that he accompany the President to Ireland."

Dr. Clarke made his last appeal on behalf of his beloved Shetland. He said: "I have done what I could for Shetland. I wish the Conference to hear me, as it may be the last time I may be present; not, however, that I would leave the Conference, that is the furthest feeling from my heart, but because God may take me. I visited Shetland as a man capable of making observations." Dr. Clarke paid a high tribute to the healthfulness of the climate, and finished thus: "I beseech you to look carefully at this mission."

Mr. Bunting brought a charge against the Superintendent of the Liverpool South Circuit—the venerable Mr. Henshaw—who was that year becoming supernumerary, for having attended an illegal meeting of stewards to consider the ministerial appointment to that circuit. He returned to the charge on a subsequent reading of the stations.

Mr. Henshaw had presided over a meeting, for which the constitutional settlement of 1797 makes express provision. The Conference had, on the first bringing of the charge, contented itself with pronouncing the meeting impolitic and improper. But now that Conference had declared its rightfulness Mr. Bunting took still higher ground, and branded it as illegal. He added: "I must enter my protest against such meetings. The appointment to Liverpool South (made by Conference at the request of the stewards) is not what it ought to be and what I should have felt it my duty to propose, if Conference had not been overawed by an illegal meeting."

Dr. Clarke also took part in the examination of the Candidates. He animadverted on a new way of meeting the classes. He said: "I have heard the people complain that, instead of the old-fashioned personal advices, they had 'just a little sermon.'" He also joined in the discussion on the appointment of a superintendent of the Irish Schools. He said: "I could wipe out every observation that has been made against my placing my Irish Schools under the superintendence of the Irish Conference, through the superintendence of the circuits. I was sure they would have more effective supervision than the Mission House in London could have possibly given them."

At this Conference, too, Mr. Bunting came into smart collision with two of his firmest and his warmest friends—Thomas

Jackson and Richard Watson. The occasion was the Government Scheme for National Education in Ireland. The plan was that the Government should supply the secular education, and the different religious bodies should themselves supply the religious element accordant to their several views, due proportion of time being allowed for the purpose.

*The Wesleyan Methodist Magazine* gave a favourable opinion of the plan of Government, not as being all that could be wished, but all that could be reasonably hoped in the circumstances of the country. Let everyone think of the matter as he pleases, yet it is not proper that facts should be distorted. The article then went on to correct some gross mis-statements which had been made in Exeter Hall. Mr. Jackson took up his firm position. "The Irish system of education is no party measure, but kindly and patriotically intended, and would doubtless have been a great benefit to the country had all the people united in good faith to carry it into effect."

The *General Book Committee* met in July, preparatory to the Conference, and a complaint was made against the *Editor* as having in those paragraphs "betrayed the trust which was confided to him." As one of these paragraphs had appeared on New Year's Day and the other on the first of April, there had been plenty of time for some one of the accusing brethren to give the Editor some intimation of the rod that was in pickle for him. But, no! the stroke came down upon him like a bolt out of the blue. He writes: "It was with difficulty that I could obtain even a brief hearing." If he made anything like as good a defence as he makes in his "Recollections" (p. 250), they, his accusers, must have found it very hard to make out a case against him. But, he adds: "In the censure that was passed upon me Mr. Bunting took the lead. The severest things that were uttered fell from his lips." An apology was demanded from the Editor for having admitted such paragraphs into the Magazine, and they went so far as to dictate in writing the very words he was to use. This the Editor could in no wise do; first, because he knew that he had not departed in the slightest from the principles and precedents of the time-honoured serial of which he was in charge; and secondly, because he saw that the blow was really aimed at Mr. Watson, who was well known to be the writer of the articles objected to.

The complaint was therefore formulated into a *Resolution* to be reported to the Conference. The Monthly Book Committee

in London had seen nothing to object to in the articles, and had passed on to Conference an unqualified vote of thanks to the Editor. This Resolution was adopted by the *General Book Committee*. When it was presented to the Conference—

Mr. Jackson rose and said: "I must say a few words. The office I have sustained is no sinecure. From what occurred at the *General Book Committee* I cannot proceed on the ground on which I have stood. I must give notice of my purpose to resign the office next year. I should be glad to be released sooner, if possible. I have the misfortune to differ in an opinion, deliberately and honestly maintained, from some eminent members of this Body. I was delivered up to half a dozen men who severely and harshly addressed me. I had no notion of having offended. I think I ought to have had an intimation of what was to take place. The matter was taken up by the very worst handle. As your Editor I am not committed to the whole of the Irish system of education. I was required to make an apology and even the words of the apology were dictated to me. I think I have a right to express an opinion on the subject."

Mr. Bunting: "No, that was the whole complaint. I am the person who may have given offence. It was not intended, but was affectionately given. I did regret the expressions in the Magazine, and shall do so to my dying day. I think we should have an opinion on any article without meaning personal offence. We cannot get on without it."

Mr. Watson: "I now regret that the Magazine was opened to topics of this kind."

But it had been sanctioned by the example of Mr. Bunting himself. It was he who in 1821, on becoming editor, introduced the *Retrospect* which was often written by his own pen, and in his own strong style. If such topics are touched on at all in the Connexional organ, it is difficult to avoid giving an opinion.

Mr. Bunting, when himself the editor, did not escape this difficulty, though he so severely censured his successor. His filial biographer says: "He incorporated in the ordinary topics of the *Magazine* a series of articles called *Christian Retrospect*, by which he purposed to influence the mind of the Connexion, not only as to specifically religious topics, but also to those subjects which, although in their first aspect secular, bordered nearly upon national and individual Christianity. In this respect, Watson was his most able and judicious assistant." In fact, Mr. Bunting did precisely what he so affectionately and solemnly complained of his successor for having also done!

Mr. Burdall: "I think the sentiments in the Magazine were modestly expressed and that the Editor should not be bound to silence on questions so distinctly and so strongly bearing on religion."

Mr. Ward: "I wish to say a word with a view to an honourable peace. There must be freedom of remark; this, however, should always be done in kindness, and we should always remember the rule, 'Give notice of any intended reproof.' The remarks made in the General Book Committee were severe enough; but Mr. Bunting practically claims the same right with regard to his brother officials, that Johnson did with regard to Goldsmith—that no one must find fault with them but himself."

Mr. Reece: "Mr. Wesley was the first editor of the Magazine, and he was the Father and Protector of the Body; subsequent editors are agents of the Body and amenable to it. As regards the conduct and principles of Mr. Jackson we are all of one mind."

Mr. James: "I cannot give a silent vote. I do not think that the Government Plan is to be censured in any extreme way. But I do not see how Mr. Bunting, who so strenuously advocated 'Catholic claims,' can resist this plan of Irish education. I think the opposition arises a good deal from political feeling. If nothing is to be said on the one side, nothing must be said on the other. The late President, before he came here objecting to the Editor, should have had clean hands himself, and not have committed himself in a document signed by himself as *President*. At the Committee Mr. Editor was addressed very improperly, and the shield of our protection should be thrown over him from the arrows directed against him. I should feel sorry if anything should disturb the harmony of the Conference. I move: 'That the explanation of Mr. Jackson is perfectly satisfactory, and that he be requested to withdraw his notice of resigning his office.'"

Mr. Jackson: "I am sorry that the time of the Conference is occupied about me. I never quarrelled with any preacher and never will. I resign on public grounds, and hope to be allowed quietly to retire. The Magazine must be allowed to express an opinion on religious bearings of public events. I do not wish to be independent, I never thought of it."

The ex-President: "I advised the Irish brethren to avoid politics. I was then asked if, as the pastors and guides of their people, they might not address them? Some resolutions were then read expressing disapprobation of the Government Plan of Education. This I signed; as I thought them perfectly in character with their office and duty as ministers. If any people ought to come prominently forward to maintain the truth we ought. I would not interfere with the sentiments of others, and I hope there will be no alienation of affection."

Mr. Gaultier: "I wonder that any brother should be offended at what has been said on either side. Without freedom of discussion we could not have stood the Sacramental dispute or the Kilhamite division. As to 'Catholic claims,' the Lord deliver us from Catholic claims! I remember the early progress of the Magazine and the debate between Mr. Pawson and Mr. Benson. If someone must be blamed about the Magazine paragraphs, the London Book Committee are the culprits. If they had objected to the first paper they could have stopped the rest. He is under the Committee, I do not wish him to make any concession; but would treat the matter kindly."

Mr. Mason: "I am much surprised at Mr. Gaultier's speech. He must have known that I (as Book Steward) am not *under the Committee*! I can but impute his ignorance on the matter to his inattention to business. I am sorry for what was said to the Editor at the General Book Committee. The

ex-President (as their President) was in the chair of all Monthly Book Committees, and never mentioned the matter at any of them. Give your officials at the Book Room fair play and we will meet you. I should be sorry if Mr. Jackson resigns. It may be against the Book Room."

Mr. Naylor: "I am sorry that the little 'Retrospect of Public Events' should be introduced into the Magazine. I have not been treated courteously by the Book Committee. If what the Magazine says is to be considered the voice of the Body, I would move that this department of it be given up."

Mr. Bunting: "I find that there are others implicated in this matter. I gave Mr. Jackson notice; I told him my deep concern at what I saw in the Magazine, and mentioned it to others of the Book Committee. Besides, there is a difference between matter of accusation and matter of conversation. If notice had been required I should have given it. Had I not known Mr. Jackson's honourable mind, I should have thought there had been great shuffling, but I believe him incapable of this. It is not the third article but the second that I object to." Mr. Bunting then read an extract from this article in his own way, and animadverted on what he deemed objectionable, namely, the quoting a refutation by Mr. C. of charges brought against the Board of Education by Mr. G. He went on: "I always feel most when I am opposed to my venerable friend, Mr. Watson. I feel trepidation in being opposed to him; but others have confessed their faith, and I wish to declare mine. I object because *as a Dissenter* I am not allowed to have a school, unless certified, and if certified, to have an inquisitorial examination of books. I take up this subject religiously; I declare my faith that the Roman Catholics cannot be benefited, but by being turned over to Protestantism, and this cannot be done by imperial Parliament. Protestant children are turned over to Socinianism and Calvinism, and Roman Catholic children are delivered to ignorance and superstition. As regards the 'Retrospect' in the Magazine I would not disapprove the Articles, but would not have a retrospect of political events. I have been sorry at the allusion to the Reform Bill, though I approve of the sentiments. I would have an abstinence from politics. With regard to the Editor being bound, we officers of Connexional departments act on our responsibility, and must be willing to be inquired into. The Editor must concede the right of inquiry. I am very sorry that Mr. James has alluded to improprieties of expression in the Committee. I am sure he has been carried out in the heat of debate into a remark alien from his settled judgment and his brotherly heart."

Mr. Watson: "I do not intend to go into the merits of this question; though I *could* say something on the other side of the subject which has been so eloquently belaboured."

It is intensely interesting and very far from uninteresting to be put into a position to overhear a discussion in the Wesleyan Methodist Conference sixty-four years ago, on the great social and religious problem which is still testing to the utmost the good sense and the good temper of all Churches and all parties in the kingdom. The first thing that strikes one is the utter non-necessity, the egregious uncalled-for-ness of the indignation which emptied its full phials on the head of Thomas Jackson, and

that in such redundancy, as to reach the still loftier and more stately brow of Richard Watson; for in the first place, the difference between Jackson and Watson, on the one hand, and Bunting and the ex-President on the other, was not one of principle at all, it was simply a divergence in their point of view, and their estimate of the probable practical working of a philanthropic, patriotic measure proposed by the then existing Government—that of Earl Grey and Lord Stanley. The principles of the Bill were those which are to this day in the ascendant, namely,—That our National Education must rest upon a religious basis. 2.—That the religious education of this kingdom must be based upon the Holy Scriptures. 3.—That it must be denominational in its carrying out, in the actual condition of Christianity in the country. 4.—That the Bill was not all that one could wish, from a purely Protestant point of view. We know that it was not what it would have been had the task of drawing up its details been left to the Wesleyan Methodist Editor.

Thus far, both sides of the Conference were perfectly agreed; but then came the parting of the way. Those who thought with Watson and with Jackson maintained that it would be a great pity and a great mistake and a grave injustice to the Irish people to deprive them of a measure which embodied such sound and solid principles, and which promised such a large diffusion of revealed truth—because it did not meet, in all respects, our own ideal. At the very least, it was a bold, strong step, a brave and stalwart stride *in the right direction*; and to them it seemed unwise and ungracious to reject it altogether because it did not go as far as we should like. It secured to Roman Catholic children an invaluable amount of Scriptural instruction along with the practical recognition of the fact that the Bible is the source and standard of religious faith.

It was plain that Mr. Bunting judged of the Bill chiefly in its bearing on the conflict between the Gospel and Roman Catholicism on the one hand and free-thinking on the other. He held that whatever light might steal into the mind of a Roman Catholic pupil through knowledge gained by secular instruction, and from so much Scriptural knowledge as the priesthood might think it safe to admit, must soon be swallowed up by the gloom of superstition. He maintained that the immense numerical superiority of the Romanists gave them such an advantage over Protestant communities that the latter



would be less helped than injured by the scheme. He feared also the danger lurking in the Government Scheme of the infusion of the leaven of *Socinianism* into the meal of Scripture. This, in truth, is the peril that has attached itself to all State schemes of education, and is to this day its most insidious bane. But an effectual check to this came to Ireland from a most unexpected quarter, and that through the very provision that Mr. Bunting had denounced as an inquisitorial supervision of school books.

The most influential member of the *National Board* was Archbishop Whately, the stalwart leader, it might almost be said the founder, of the Broad Church School. But the broadness of Whately's theology was the broadness of both-sidedness and balance. No great thinker ever pointed out more plainly than did he the Will-o'-the-Wisp illusiveness of systems which would substitute imaginative intuitions for authenticated revelations, and self-trust for a humble dependence on the grace of God. Hence, he saved the National Schools from the fascinating "Moral Tales" of Maria Edgeworth, a brilliant Irish writer; because they filled the children's heads with the delusion that they could form a healthful moral character, and lead a truly Godlike life without any special reference to the Word of God, or reliance on the grace of God. The Protestant denominations of Ireland, in the course of eight-and-twenty years, woke up to the fact that they had been standing in their own light and in their own way. Had they, at the very first, applied to the Government for the explanation and expansion of the Denominational side of the Scheme, which included all they would themselves concede to others, and which they might as well have had first as last, all would have come right; but instead of this, by way of opposing Popery, they left it, to its own chuckling contentation, in exclusive possession of the whole field of operation!

On this point I am glad to find myself in full accord with a great authority. In his statesmanly, sagacious Essay on "Popular Education," published so long ago as 1859, Dr. Rigg remarks as follows:—

"We hold it indeed to have been a great and mischievous mistake that, when the National Scheme was first promulgated, the Protestant Denominations of Ireland, headed by the Established Church and the Presbyterians, refused to do anything but oppose and denounce the measure. Had they offered it their support and co-operation on moderate and reasonable conditions, doubtless they might have added such provisions and guards to the

system, and have brought such influence to the National Board, as would have prevented not a little evil and ensured not a little good."

Their cheap and first-rate *text-books* have, indeed, done right good service on this side St. George's Channel.

But, alas! this is not the only instance in which enthusiastic partisans have shown themselves much more intent on the triumph of their own ideas than on the practical furtherance of the interests involved. Unless an Act of Parliament be a proclamation that their view is the right one, and every other view is wrong, they will oppose it to the utmost—although they cannot but admit that it would check and curtail, to a very large extent, the evil with which they are at war.

Mr. Bunting had introduced into the Christian Retrospect such subjects as *The Re-opening of Parliament*, *The Way of Liberation of Greece*, *The State of Turkey*, *The State of Ireland*, *Agriculture*: at least as political as the religious aspects of the *Scheme for National Education in Ireland*. Yet the last-named was tabooed in 1832, and the Editor called over the coals till his toes were sorely blistered. No doubt all questions mixed with politics are very ticklish, inasmuch as the readers are far more wishful to be confirmed in their present opinions than to be guided into sounder ones. An experienced editor will be not only very wary in the handling, but even very chary in the touching any such explosive matter.

Mr. Bunting also defined with masterly precision the relation of a minister holding a departmental office in the Connexion to his Committee and the Conference respectively. "In regard to the Editor being 'bound,' we *act upon our responsibility*, and must be willing to be inquired into." This puts the matter admirably. The Editor is not the appointee of the Book Committee, so he is not their "agent" nor servant to command. He is the appointee of the Conference, and holds directly of that body; but they, on their part, have also their responsibility. They have not only the unbounded right of animadversion on and inquiry into any action of the Editor which in their opinion calls for their attention, but this lies quite within their function and their duty. Of course this right must be exercised and this duty discharged in a thoroughly Christian manner. Mr. Jackson's error in the matter was the claiming as an official right what was just a matter of fraternal courtesy. An Editor should make his Committee perfectly aware that he is liable to question on any editorial

matter on which any member of Committee may see fit to comment. It is the ordinary, though not the invariable, usage of a member of the Committee who purposes to question the admissibility of any article that has been published in the Magazine to just mention his intention to the Editor beforehand. But this is done in obedience to a higher law than any regulation of the Conference, a law no lower than the Golden Rule itself. It is a matter that comes under the head of Christian courtesy. If a man's own heart and habits do not suggest this course, no one else can bind him to it. It is one of those acts of brotherly considerateness which are almost as easy to do as to leave undone, and, in any case, "*against* which there is no law," either Connexional or Christian, human or Divine. To say the least, it would have been much the nicer course for one friend to take towards another.

It was, however, highly edifying and assuring to see Mr. Bunting stepping forth in Conference as the champion of freedom of speech and stricture, and of the right of questioning officials as to their official acts. He himself, rather than be questioned on one act in one office, had given notice of resigning all his offices, and had thus silenced further questioning. Another very interesting point is this. Here we have, so far as I know, the only instance in which Mr. Bunting distinctly assumed the style and title of "Dissenter"—"*I, as a Dissenter.*" Certainly I heard him, some years later, complain of the use of that term in the Magazine, with regard to a Methodist, and express his hope—in the Book Committee and Ministers' Meeting—that we should most carefully avoid "*avowed Dissent.*"

It was a sad loss that Mr. Watson was physically disabled from presenting the other side of the Irish School question. But both he and Clarke "*had the sentence of death in themselves,*" and were neither in the state nor in the mood for a strenuous stand-up fight. As they sat side by side upon the platform, their admiring brethren could read too clearly on their noble faces the deep-cut signature of death. Clarke warned Watson to get home as soon as possible, yet as they gripped each other's honest hands at parting, they wist not that their trysting-place was *Heaven*. Clarke was the first to reach the goal; but Watson was not far behind. He lingered and he laboured on through the remainder of that year, and the first week of the next, and then he fell asleep in Christ.

Besides these two mighties, another fine, distinguished figure

disappeared for ever from the platform of the Conference ; this was John James, the urbane and genial Missionary Secretary along with Watson. This was, I think, his last visit to his native city, for he was seized with fatal sickness after preaching in City Road Chapel, London, on the first Sunday evening in the following October, and after two days' illness died. Never again was his rich mellow voice, said to be one of the most melodious of all human voices, lifted up in gentle protest against improprieties of expression in the discussions of the Wesleyan Methodist brotherhood.

A vote of thanks having been passed to Watson for his very special services to the literature of the Connexion, he replied : " When I gave myself to the Methodist Body I gave all ; if my little endeavours, for such they are, to furnish my junior brethren with some assistance in their studies be accepted by them I shall be thankful."

Dr. Clarke before leaving Conference conferred with the Irish representatives with regard to his Irish Schools. He was very anxious to be found of the Master in peace, and he was unwilling to let his charitable institutions be a bone of contention between the Conferences. His fellow-countrymen, on their part, " desired peace because their country was nourished by the King's country." So they handed back the schools to him, and he without delay executed a deed conveying them, in capital condition and well endowed, to the Wesleyan Methodist Missionary Society. Mr. Bunting was very careful to inform the Conference that this was Dr. Clarke's own act and deed, and not that of his executors, as was popularly supposed. Dr. Clarke took coach from Liverpool to Bristol and thence to Frome to fulfil a round of public services at that place, and then at Weston-super-Mare, Westbury, Bristol, and Bath on his way to his old home in his new circuit. But on the plan of his old circuit, London South, his name stood for Trust Sermons to be preached at Bayswater on the next Sunday. Thither therefore he betook himself on Saturday.

" That day was the preparation and the Sabbath drew on," and to Adam Clarke " that Sabbath was a high day," for he entered on the Sabbath-keeping " which remaineth for the people of God." It is impossible to forget the thrill which shook the Methodist community when the intelligence passed through it— "*Dr. Clarke is dead!*" What an awe it cast on us wild, brave Grove lads when, his friend and fellow-labourer, the fine old Governor, George Morley, announced to us just before family

worship, in tremulous and saddened tone: "Boys, I have to tell you Dr. Clarke is dead." All Methodism put on mourning for its famous man. Throughout the United Kingdom from pulpits draped in black, sad, solemn, and impassioned homilies poured forth. Whatever spark of holy, high ambition for sacred scholarship and worthy service in the cause of God and man might glow in any schoolboy's bosom was fanned into a flame. Philanthropists and scholars, and all the friends of evangelistic enterprise, and the devoutest men in all the churches of the saints, "made great lamentation over him."

Our blessings brighten as they take their flight, and the appreciation and the admiration of the man whose noble character was on the same high plane as his evangelistic preaching, and overtopped his massive, many-peaked acquirements, were much enhanced by his death. The brethren seemed to vie with one another in atoning to his memory for the marked yet most unmerited discourtesies which had been shown by some one or two distinguished ministers in the abnormal way in which he had been made a supernumerary, and thus denied one chief *solatium* of an aged minister in retiring from "the active work." It is much to be regretted that an unwillingly misleading account of this unhappy business should have recently appeared in the most influential quarter. It is in the reminiscences more than half a century after the event, of a very acute, fair-minded minister, with a strong Methodist memory, but whose knowledge of the case at the *time* was perforce fragmentary, and therefore his impression at the time not very accurate.

At this session the Conference made its last indignant and triumphant protest against slavery in the British Empire. Watson drew up the Resolutions in his own masterly style and took an animated part in their discussion. Thus fittingly was closed the Conferential career of the eloquent theologian and philanthropist.

Mr. Bunting: "I would suggest that in the Pastoral Address our people be counselled that in the exercise of the elective franchise, they should have respect to character."

The election was to the first Reformed Parliament. A reference to the better observance of the Sabbath was also recommended.

To preclude the possible recurrence of the melancholy case of Dr. Clarke, the express Rule was re-affirmed that "No man shall be made a Supernumerary without his own knowledge and consent."

To this Mr. Bunting objected, but at his suggestion the affirmation was decided on that "No President is at liberty to withhold from the Conference the fact that he has received from any brother a remonstrance against anything at which he feels aggrieved."

#### CONFERENCE OF 1833.

The Conference of 1833 met in Manchester under the Presidency of Richard Treffry, who had raised himself immensely in the appreciation of his brethren by the skill, the wariness, and the success with which he had piloted the South London Circuit through such a boisterous and choppy sea.

The first matter of especial interest which came before the Conference was another escapade by William Griffith. Mr. Haswell gave him a very high character. The case was referred to a Committee, who unanimously recommended that "he be placed under the direction of the President, without his name being printed." He was placed under the notice of Mr. Reece.

Discussion was occasioned by the case of a young Irish M.D., who had graduated on this side St. George's Channel, and now offered himself to the British Conference. Mr. Bunting remarked "there is a great want of preachers in Ireland; they have no list of reserve. I think that some young men of refinement and scholarship who come to this country and come out here escape the hardships, etc., of Irish Methodism. Ought they not to be asked if they owe nothing to their country? It might be a good test of their call and zeal. I do not refer particularly to Dr. —, but really something of patriotism is wanted." Messrs. Lessey, Marsden, and Waugh spoke on the same side. Mr. Waddy "would not have a retrospective law made."

Mr. Bunting: "The Irish Connexion is needy, and we have a sufficiency of young men. Some ought to be sent over there. Dr. Clarke, a pre-eminent authority, would not take out a man who would not go anywhere. We must see that young men are not independent, but teachable. We must attend to discipline as well as to doctrine." He pointed his moral by mentioning the name of "Joseph Beaumont," who was not present to defend himself. Mr. Stephens applauded Dr. Clarke's submission to rule in all things.

Two women preachers were complained of: Mrs. Taft (Mary Barrett, through whose preaching two future Presidents—Joseph Taylor and Thomas Jackson—had been converted to God) and

the immortal Dinah Morris (Mrs. Evans). Mr. Bunting referred to a circuit in which an asterisk was placed upon the plan alluding to a female preacher. Several remarks were made on the impropriety of female preaching. The elect ladies just named were neither asterisks nor asteroids, but stars of the first magnitude, and the great mass of Derbyshire hearers preferred workmanly preaching from the lips of a woman to effeminate effusions from the lips of a man.

Another of Mr. Bunting's "wise saws" was called forth by Brother R——, a successful Revivalist, who having been blessed with a great awakening in his circuit, had taken advantage of the flood-tide of ingathering to begin a new chapel without waiting for the consent of the Committee.

Mr. Bunting: "Brother R—— is one of those preachers who are more ambitious to *build chapels* than to *build up Churches*."

"Alternative Obituaries of Dr. Clarke were submitted to the Conference, written by eminent ministers, but neither of them was approved entirely. One of them was marred by infelicities of phrase, and the other by semi-anecdotal details. Bromley made the most judicious speech upon the subject. Mr. Naylor was requested to condense his Character of Mr. James; but avowed that he 'could sooner write a volume than do that.'"

Mr. Dixon moved "that Messrs. Bunting, Thomas Jackson, and Hannah, be requested to draw up the Character of Richard Watson."

Mr. Bunting said: "This is not a matter to move about. We may move too fast as well as too slow. I have sufficient reason for declining."

Mr. Bunting on a subsequent Obituary: "I object to the phrase, 'a conscious sense,' which means a *feeling feeling*. I would rather say 'a Divine witness of his acceptance.' Another Obituary was objected to as 'not sufficiently evangelical.'"

Mr. Bunting: "I believe Brother —— to have been prevailingly pious, but he was too jocose upon the platform."

In another Obituary it was stated that "at one period he meddled with politics." Mr. Reece remarked: "Brother —— never thought of that period but with sorrow and shame." Mr. Bunting said: "I know that he once well nigh lost his character and his soul, but he recovered."

A minister—living at a distance from his Superintendent—had built a chapel without consulting him, leaving nearly four times the amount of debt to that which he had stated to the Chapel Committee. Mr. Bunting remarked: "I think this no trivial case, but a great sin."

Next came up a matter of real historic interest having reference to the first Methodist newspaper. It was far from being a mere episode, but was vitally connected with the whole system and series of our newspaper undertakings. A brief prefatory explanation is indispensable. Some four very ardent, able, and adventurous sons of distinguished Methodist ministers,

three of whom had been schoolfellows at Woodhouse Grove, having just emerged from their minority, cast about every way for some remunerative investment of their intellectual capital, being very short of any other ; and it occurred to them that Methodism had no newspaper to match the organ of the Evangelical party in the Established Church—*The Record*—and the projected papers of political Dissent. It seemed to them "an excellent idea" to start a weekly of this kind. They readily obtained recommendations from influential ministers. At first the enterprise succeeded. The successive issues of *The Christian Advocate* were spirited and spicy, for the young journalists had plenty of pen-power, and their names seemed to guarantee the genuineness of their Methodist principles. They were already "literary characters" not unknown to the *Annals*.

But soon "a change came o'er the spirit of their dream." By degrees the young Editor began to assume an irresponsible dictatorship in Methodism, the custody of the Connexional conscience, and a censorship of all the churches and religious institutions of the land ; and he posed not only as the one authentic mouth-piece of Methodism, but also as public prosecutor of all who held views at variance with his own.

In 1830, no less a man than Richard Watson had felt it necessary to call the attention of the Conference to the disturbing and divisive tendency of this new organ of crudescent politics and fermenting Church hypotheses. But still it went on. Mr. Bunting had presumed to quietly exercise his civil right and discharge his civil duty according to his own convictions, and without deference to the dictation of the young *Christian Advocate*, who by this time—

" Assumes the god,  
Affects to nod,  
And seems to shake the spheres."

This brought down upon the head of Mr. Bunting the fierce denunciations of the oracular young journalist. And in order to make a case against Jabez Bunting, the journalist found it necessary to shamelessly misrepresent the estimable, philanthropic, nobleman for whom he had noiselessly recorded his vote. This was felt by his brethren to be simply unendurable.

Mr. Bunting said: "The time may come when I may need a good opinion from my brethren. I have nothing to fear from the aged brethren ; but younger brethren who have not known me in my better days (Mr. Bunting



was then just fifty-four years old) may hereafter treat me harshly. I sometimes feel a little temptation on this point." The Conference unanimously vociferated "No." "I think those who have recommended this paper may be allowed to withdraw their names: not by compulsion—all must be voluntary. I would have all party feeling buried."

Mr. Atherton said: "The paper is universally *condemned, bought, and read*. This I cannot reconcile." He denounced its contents in the strongest terms.

Mr. Bromley said: "I fear we are all readers of the paper." The Conference vociferated "No." "I am persuaded Mr. Bunting will never want honour and respect from this Body. I should regret that the Conference should come to any vote on the subject. This would add to its circulation considerably."

Mr. Newton: "I have not read five copies of the paper. I think I have no right as a Methodist preacher to recommend what I and Methodism have no control over. I have been asked in every part of the kingdom, 'Why do preachers give their names to a paper which libels the Body?'"

Mr. Gaulter: "I, the other day, saw a copy. I would have all feeling to expire in this session. I never wrote anything against the Conference. I should deprecate the mention of the paper in the minutes."

Mr. Marsden: "I have been called upon by a member of the London Missionary Society, who complained of the *Advocate* having made an attack on their society. I told him it was not sanctioned by Methodists. The gentleman inquired, 'Is it not recommended by many of your ministers?' I was at a loss what to say. I think every man should withdraw his name."

Mr. Waugh said: "I do not know three persons among us in Ireland who take the paper in. It has been expelled from the reading-room in Dublin. Mr. Bunting is not the exclusive property of England; he belongs to the Methodist world."

Mr. James Wood said: "I inadvertently gave my name to a recommendation of the paper, but detested the principles on which it is conducted, and withdrew my name."

Mr. Naylor complained of clamour raised against himself among the junior brethren. This was disavowed. He said: "I think the paper very contemptible, but still very injurious." He compared it to a spring-gun hidden in the grass charged with bullets. He thought inquiry should be made who wrote certain articles.

Mr. Dixon said: "Mr. Bunting is too great to be hurt with such little things. The elements of his character are not injured. His comfort may be affected. He ought to be assured that we participate not in the slanders issued against him. He is persecuted for upholding principles which his persecutors do not like. The 120 ministers, if there be so many, who support that paper, or lend their names to it, are answerable for its principles, and they ought to be required to disavow them, for they contravene our rules."

Mr. Ryerson remarked: "In the United States and Lower Canada this paper is regarded as the organ of the Conference. But in Upper Canada the paper is prohibited, because under the pretence of connection with Methodism it is designed to overthrow Methodism."

Mr. Reece: "I would have (1) every man who has given his name to this paper should withdraw it; (2) there should be no subscribing to it nor reading of it."

Mr. Rowland: "I abhor what has been inserted in the *Advocate*."

Mr. Newton: "Is it correct that the Welsh editor has inserted in the *Welsh Magazine* articles taken from the *Advocate*?" This was stated to be the case.

Mr. Bowers: "I disavow the imputation of Mr. Bunting that the younger brethren had any suspicion of, or any unfriendly feeling towards, him. I have great respect and affection for him, and still more for his principles. I would share with him in contumely, whatever may be the consequences, fearlessly and manfully."

Mr. Morley moved: "That a letter be sent to the Secretaries of the London Missionary Society expressive of our disapprobation of the articles in the *Advocate*."

Mr. Bromley objected.

Mr. Stanley: "I think we cannot vote without knowing the specific charge against the London Missionary Society." The resolution passed, but not unanimously.

Mr. Burdsal: "I think those who have recommended the paper might sign a protest against it."

Mr. Pilter: "I gave my name because the paper was edited by the sons of Methodist preachers. I am sorry for it, and have drawn up a protest." (This he read.)

Mr. R. Wood: "I have the honour to be the son of a Methodist preacher, and have a fraternal affection for all such; I rejoice when they do well, and sorrow when they do the contrary. I believe the preachers who recommended the paper intended to gratify their fathers. I wish the father of one of the young men may be requested to say on the platform what he said in the Stationing Committee."

Mr. Bunting: "I think my old friend, Mr. Stephens, should be excused. I have no suspicion against him, not the slightest. I wish to say if the recanters intend to do anything they should do it themselves. I do not express a desire they should do anything; I have not placed myself in this position. Whatever becomes of me the recantations should appear in the vehicles in which the recommendations appeared—the *Record*, *Patriot*, *Scottish Guardian*, and *Evangelical Magazine*."

Mr. Wood was requested to repeat what Mr. Stephens said in the Stationing Committee, substantially, namely: "The spirit and principles of that paper are not mine. I would rather follow my son to the grave than that he should promulgate such principles."

Mr. V. Ward said: "I have written some articles for the paper, and I did wish it might succeed because it is in the hands of sons of Methodist preachers. I have never given my name. I might have done so if it had been properly conducted. The practical question is: Should we disclaim the paper? I have sometimes differed from Mr. Bunting, and expressed my differences. I hope I have done this at the proper time. Whenever Mr. Bunting, or any other preacher, is attacked, I feel myself attacked. I disapprove of anonymous publications when character is concerned."

The Conference adopted *nem. con.* the Minute of the Liverpool District Meeting, and it was printed in our Minutes.

The effect of the offensive articles in the *Advocate* was very great, but precisely opposite to that which was intended. It vastly strengthened the position of the powerful minister whom it so outrageously assailed, and the condemnation by the Conference, and the withdrawal from the sponsorship of the 120 ministers who were said to have commended it, and the exposure of the real objects of the paper, ensured its speedy and complete collapse. It began to be recognised in England, as in the clear, bright atmosphere of Upper Canada, as a paper which, "under pretence of connection with Methodism, was designed to overthrow Methodism."

## CHAPTER V.

### THE CONFERENCE OF 1834. THEOLOGICAL INSTITUTION.

THE Conference of 1834 was held in London under the Presidency of Joseph Taylor. A great gathering of ministers and laymen took place two days before to discuss the project of a Theological Institution. I quote from Mr. Fowler's Journal: "The President introduced the business by adverting to the object of the meeting. Then Dr. Warren asked: 'Is this meeting what Conference contemplated? I think not.' Brethren answered: 'If not, Conference alone can call us to order.'" Mr. Walton read the Minutes of the Conference Committee, from which it appeared that the lowest probable cost would be £5,500, to meet which there was:

A legacy from Ireland	...	£1,000
From Missions	...	700
„ Book Room	...	500
		<hr/>
		£2,200

Mr. Scarth, of Leeds, said: "I shall be satisfied with the decision of the Conference. The matter is in good and safe hands. I think the entire expense may be raised without taxing the Book Room or the Mission Fund. If not, it will show that our people are not very zealous in the matter. Two considerations have great weight with me: 1. A straiter door of entrance to the ministry; 2. Will not a man go into the ministry better fitted for it by two years' application to study?"

Mr. Guest, of South Wales, said: "If a Methodist preacher has not piety, he is nothing. I am afraid that some young men may look up to our ministry as a *profession* or as a respectable position unless safeguards be observed. I would not have it a 'college'; that tends to vanity."

Mr. Thorold, of Lincoln, said: "I have been at a Dissenting Academy and have taken my degree at a University. There is good and evil in both. But are not the evils curable? We differ from other communities. We will not have a candidate who has not piety."

Mr. Staley, of Sheffield: "Young men will learn more in two years under tuition than in four if left to themselves. If the hearts of the friends in London are as mine—" Here Mr. Farmer gave him his hand and the meeting was strongly excited, and clapped.

Mr. Crook, of Liverpool, said: "*Where there is this submission one to another there is unity.*" The plan was agreed to unanimously, excepting Dr. Warren, who held up his hand against it.

In the Conference the first point of interest, after the elections, was a speech by Mr. Bunting respecting a vote which had been given to Mr. Bromley for the secretaryship. This called forth replies from Mr. Atherton and others, remonstrating against Mr. Bunting's "asperity" in the matter.

Mr. Bunting remarked on a preacher who was "not sufficiently lengthy in his application." This called forth observations on long and short sermons. Mr. Bunting defended his point with his usual ability, but I (Mr. F.) do not think he made it impregnable. He referred to Mr. Wesley as having preached long, but quoted *exceptions* as if they formed the rule.

Mr. Bunting gave John Morris, a young man from Manchester, a very high character, and stated that if he were polished in some institution, as all God's steel ought to be, he would make a very superior man.

Mr. Bunting remarked on the case of a young man recommended from Leeds: "I was very much pleased with him, but thought the furniture of his mind defective, and without his receiving something in some way from somebody I could not recommend him."

In both cases Mr. Bunting showed very exceptional insight into the quality and qualifications of young men. John Morris proved himself to be sheer steel.

Mr. Bromley: "Mr. Newton should be on a par with his brethren. Mr. Bunting is wont to warn us against 'allowing *inclination* to interfere with principle.' We should all remember this rule."

Mr. Bunting's reply is a good specimen of the ready smartness with which he could extricate himself from a glaring inconsistency and retreat under cover of a satiric pleasantry.

Mr. Bunting: "My last speech was designed to carry out the principle of my equally humble former speech. I would have Mr. Newton at liberty that Mr. Bromley may stop at home. He must learn to say 'No.' Mr. Bromley won't be wanted now. A man ought to doctor himself before he puts himself forward."

At last the man was hit upon for writing the Obituary of Dr. Clarke—David McNicoll—who did the great man justice. He showed that Clarke's oratory was the eloquence of a loving heart, and its energy was not less than its subtlety and tenderness. His character was beyond all praise. The reading of this Obituary produced a powerful effect upon the Conference.

Mr. Bunting: "Some words had better be left out. I recommend all Dr. Clarke's friends—who call themselves so by way of eminence, and attempt to

raise themselves upon his shoulders, a position not very natural to them—to cultivate Mr. McNicoll's spirit." Mr. Bromley remarked on "the elegance and beauty of the Obituary. It made some approach to the excellence of the man."

In nothing is the genuine brotherhood of the Methodist ministry more beautifully made manifest than in the earnest recognition of long and loyal service on the decease or the retirement of a veteran companion in arms. It must be said to the high honour of Adam Clarke that his spirit was too noble and his soul too Christian to inflict injury on the Church of God on account of any unkindness towards him on the part of any of its ministers. A letter reached him at Sheffield, where he was preaching "Charity Sermons," giving details of the outrages practised on our West Indian Missionaries, on reading which he wrote to Mrs. Clarke: "I shall pocket and seal up all my causes of complaint, and join myself to the forlorn hope, in the front of the storming party, in the defence of God's people."

Dr. Bunting: "There is sad deficiency of pulpit talent among a considerable number of the Welsh preachers."

Testimony was given to the eloquence of the Welsh preaching.

"All persons taken into the work for Mission stations are to remain abroad for life."

"An Assistant Missionary never comes upon our funds, he is neither more nor less than a hired local preacher."

A Superintendent was charged with the illegal expulsion of several leaders. A Special District Meeting, with an ex-President of high repute for judiciousness, and with fifty-three years' experience of circuit work, was in the chair, and had pronounced him guilty. He appealed, and the case was referred to a Committee of the Conference. They reversed the decision of the Special District Meeting, finding no *proof* that he had acted *unconstitutionally* in expelling these members. They severely rebuked the Special District Meeting for its decision. This recommendation of the Conference Committee was adopted both in its acquittal of the accused Superintendent, and its reprehension of the Special District Meeting.

The "young men" were arranged for the purpose of examination, but the Stationing Committee had not come in, and the theological examination of the candidates for ordination was regarded as one of the most important duties of the Conference, so they were waited for, and the interval was utilised by an address from Mr. Sutcliffe. He declared himself "an advocate for a school of preaching and correct pronunciation. There should be nothing mawkish, but all natural and coherent; thought leading to thought. Preach a *present* salvation. God is as strong and loving to-day as He ever was or will be. Methodist doctrine is that of the primitive Church." He gave suitable advice as to the way of conducting household visitation. Mr. Pinder said that Mr. Sutcliffe "exemplified the duties he enforced."

Mr. Cusworth referred to some chapels in Shetland.

Mr. Bunting said: "That anomalous business has come to an end. It lived with Dr. Clarke, and with him it died."

In the examination of the young men, Mr. Bunting again took occasion to disparage Fletcher as a theologian. He made remarks on the doctrine of imputation which showed that he strangely misconceived or had utterly forgotten Fletcher's teaching on the subject. Mr. Bunting was perfectly Fletcherian in his own deliverance: "Faith justifies because it brings us to the place of meeting with God."

Mr. Bunting referred to "The evil of visiting from circuit to circuit, instead of visiting from *house to house*. I think too many preachers are invited to Missionary Meetings. Our friends and our foes are watching our expenses. I think there is too much Sabbath work." Mr. Reece, too, condemned "diffusive rambling, and resolved to be more attentive to his pastoral duties."

Mr. Ward: "There are two extremes: too much running about, and too much shutting up in the study. Dr. Clarke used to say: 'The way to a man's heart is through his house.'" Mr. Ward insisted on "the importance of junior colleagues being 'helpers' to their Superintendents." A candidate who was not present at this examination through illness was not received into full Connexion, but had a dispensation to administer the Lord's Supper.

Mr. Bunting: "I think no one man is fit to take the entire care of a congregation. It is not the plan of God. By charging us to *preach* is not meant popping into a pulpit once a fortnight, but taking the regular work. If Independency is the best thing, what have we to do here? There is a great deal of cheating Satan in this matter. We must have a friendly not a captious superintendence over each other. There need be nothing else than unity among us: if we differ at all let it be among ourselves not among our people." These remarks were received with the most cordial feeling and entire unanimity.

Mr. Bunting supported the proposal of the Stationing Committee to appoint a single man along with Mr. Newton, half the expense being paid from the Mission Fund. Mr. Bromley said: "I rise in great embarrassment. Mr. Bunting's speech of this morning, in which he exhorted us to stay at home, will not hang together with his speech of this afternoon. I am glad that he has had the courage to speak in this manner."

A young supernumerary wished to return to the full circuit work. He said: "I freely confess and deeply deplore my former eccentricities. I have no affection for them. They are excrescences." He made a very powerful, tender, eloquent address. Mr. N. "wished to be satisfied that the spirit of the ministry was restored to him." Mr. Bunting moved his re-admission. It was unanimously passed. Another supernumerary made the like application. Mr. Gaultier: "The man who is not touched with mercy by repentance is neither fit for Heaven nor for earth."

Dr. Bunting said: "If Dr. Dodd deserved to be hanged once, Mr. ——— deserved to be hanged ten times." The brethren generally thought Dodd did not deserve hanging.

A missionary in the West Indies, who, after nineteen years' service—in very special circumstances—had left without leave, was deprived of nine years of ministerial standing. This was felt by the Conference to be an excessive punishment of a brave man who had seen so much service, and had hazarded his life "on the high places of the field" in the conflict with slavery. Messrs. Joseph Taylor, ex-missionary secretary, Grindrod, and Newton pleaded in mitigation of the sentence, especially as he had been recommended to the merciful consideration "of his brethren."

Mr. Bunting said: "If you mitigate the sentence, do it with your eyes open. Don't blame the missionary secretaries if men come home without leave. Some friendly captain will bring them home at half-price. Your own rule requires his expulsion. Think of a man leaving a circuit without a preacher!"

The defence was the simple statement of the facts. So far from "leaving a circuit without a preacher," he had *left three preachers in the circuit*. Where is the law demanding the expulsion of the man? It seemed a stern sentence to come under the head of "merciful consideration" to be deprived of all but double the term of service during which he had "borne the burden and heat of the day" beneath the blaze of the West Indian sun. He had lived through the fierce times of slaveholders' persecution, when all at once his health collapsed. His Obituary in the Minutes states that in the heroic times of our West Indian Mission "he was driven from no duty by fear," and that "the state of his health *compelled* his return to England." He knew perfectly well that the Mission House could not refuse their consent to his return after such an unbroken length of service. He was completely disabled from further service in the tropics. At this juncture "a friendly captain" offered to bring him and his family to England at half-price, an important saving to the Mission funds. He was medically assured that as speedy a return as possible to his native air was essential to his recovery, so he anticipated the formal leave which he knew could not be refused. For this he was deprived of nine out of nineteen years of hazardous and noble service. The stigma and the hardness of this sentence crushed him; I remember him as a broken-spirited, dejected brother. (His son was one of my pupils.)

The profits of the Book Room during the year were £8,843.

A long discussion took place on the system of teaching the Catechism introduced into Sunday Schools by a Mr. Darling, a Scotchman, and a Catechism of his own which was extensively used instead of the Conference Catechism. The system, as expounded and exemplified by himself at Woodhouse Grove,



was what Mr. Atherton pronounced it, "the quintessence of nonsense," and the Book Committee rightly resented it as "a see-saw system of words."

Mr. Bunting said: "When the obstinate people of Edinburgh would have Gaul's system Mr. Haswell should have written to the Conference. I disapprove of Mr. Darling's piracy of our Catechism. On the other hand, Mr. Watson was not the fittest man to draw up catechisms. He was designed for a loftier region. Mr. D.'s system, I think, has been kicked out too unceremoniously. I would have a Committee to examine it. I was introduced to Mr. Darling, and almost compelled to read his book, but opened casually upon the question: 'What is Atonement?' I shut the book, and told him it was highly objectionable and not intelligible to a child. Mr. Darling was introduced among us as a public man, how came he to be sanctioned? I wish to ask, if this system does not produce a kind of mechanical secularity. With all due respect for the Book Committee, I think they had no right to issue a new catechism. Our accredited catechisms are Conference catechisms." Mr. Ward: "I do not think so highly or so meanly of Mr. Darling's system as some of my brethren do; I am sorry that any confusion has been created in our Connexion. Many of our people catch at anything new. At Newcastle I advised Mr. Darling to go home and attend to his large little family; I told him he thought himself a much cleverer fellow than he really was."

Mr. Bunting: "I think if the preachers on the Manchester, Sheffield, and Leeds Circuits formed into a committee they might report next Conference." The committee was appointed.

Mr. Pilter: "Why have Dr. Clarke's MSS. been rejected and Mr. Watson's accepted?"

Mr. Bunting: "With my eyes perfectly open—I know there are traitors in the camp—I will say, it would have been injurious to our pecuniary interests. The market is full of Dr. Clarke's productions. There is no room in America: they *have* four editions and know the consequence of what I have stated."

An eminent minister wondered at the sum given for Mr. Watson's MSS., £2,000. Mr. Lessy: "It is injurious when some brethren represent themselves as friends of Dr. Clarke, others as friends of Mr. Watson. I wish there were an end to this unholy rivalry." The Editor: "Independently of what the Connexion owes to Mr. Watson, the MSS. are worth the sum paid for them." Mr. Scott: "I have heard it said that the Committee would give £2,000 for a fragment of Mr. Watson's, yet refused Dr. Clarke's valuable *Dictionary*. I am pained at what has been said." Mr. W. Smith asked: "Are the Sermon Sketches in Mr. Watson's own handwriting or taken down in shorthand?" It was answered: "The greater part in Mr. Watson's handwriting." Mr. Gaulter: "When I thought we had paid too much for the MSS.—" (Mr. B. Slater cried out, "I would give £2,000.") Mr. Gaulter proceeded: "It gives me pain to see two such men brought into competition and into conflict among our people." (The Conference cried, "No! no!") Mr. Gaulter: "I beseech my brethren not to interrupt me; I have not prepared my speech; I could not have done so. I think the money is too much for the MSS., but not too much as an acknowledgment of Mr. Watson's

services. But I was brought up, Methodistically and otherwise, in a school of parsimony." Mr. Bromley: "In speaking I have obeyed a canon in the Minutes: 'Speak freely what is in your mind.' I wait with impatience to hear what Mr. Bunting has to say."

Mr. Bunting: "I solemnly deny that there has been an origination of any rivalry on the part of Mr. Watson's friends. We learnt a little common sense certainly by intercourse with Mr. Watson. The last conversation I had with him he said he regretted that he was always drawn into collision with Dr. Clarke. The whole of the guilt Mr. Watson's friends throw on Dr. Clarke's friends. The sum of £2,000 appears great to those who deal in small wares and little matters. The dearness of those MSS. is, in Mr. Bromley's spectacles (Mr. Bromley was obliged to wear spectacles constantly). I am sorry I heard some terms used in this debate."

It was agreed that "no purchase of books or MSS. shall be concluded without the consent of the General Book Committee."

A letter was read from Dr. Beaumont complaining (1) of the review of Dr. Clarke's *Life in the Magazine*; (2) of the rejection from the *Magazine* of the advertisement of a monument to Dr. Clarke; (3) of the sum paid for Mr. Watson's MSS.

Financial difficulties in Sheffield having been complained of,

Mr. Bunting said: "That comes of preachers obstinately claiming circuits for which they are not qualified."

Mr. Bunting remarked on "the impropriety of appointing committees of Quarterly Meetings. Mr. Toase may well be popular; I believe I could be popular were I to do so." (This was a shrewd side-thrust to the ex-President, whom Mr. Toase had succeeded in the Superintendency of Southwark, and whose example he had followed.)

Mr. Bunting: "I am sorry that the brethren take so much pains for themselves when so much pains has been taken for them. The Stationing Committee have endeavoured to the best of their ability to prevent these brethren having to speak for themselves, but it seems waste of time."

The Editor, in reply to the vote of thanks, said: "I was honoured with Dr. Clarke's personal confidence. I have for the last nine years spent fourteen or sixteen hours a day at my desk. My sight is injured by application to study, but by the thanks of the Conference I am fully compensated."

Mr. Bunting: "Before this matter closes, a word for the mighty dead. There was no comparison between the congregations, talent, and usefulness of Dr. Clarke and Mr. Benson. Dr. Clarke was never more useful than at Gravel Lane. His congregations were full to overflowing."

It was agreed "that £26 per annum should be allowed to Mr. Watson's widowed mother during her life." Also that "Tablets should be erected to the memory of Messrs. Clarke, Watson, and Benson, at the expense of the Book Room."

Mr. Bunting said: "I have heard that the tablet to Dr. Clarke is intended to honour his *literary* character, and that the inscription is unobjectionable. If so, I shall be glad to become a subscriber."

At Downham there had been a Revival but not much improvement in financial matters. Mr. Bunting said: "Young members properly trained are willing to give, whilst old ones are apathetic and not so easily wrought upon. I would not have us take measures to affect our finances on the strength of

a recent Revival ; I would ask where the Sunday places are and whether this is a proper circuit to make a benevolent experiment in ?" It was said : " The population is thin." The application for an additional preacher was not granted.

The departmental business was this year of very special interest, but it had been so spiritedly and satisfactorily dealt with in the preliminary committees that it gave the Conference very little trouble, and took up but about two days of its time. Several missionary matters most encouraging and most important, were reported and auspiciously disposed of. One great point was the election of two secretaries to fill the posts left vacant by the lamented James and Watson. The choice of Mr. Bunting was inevitable. He was beyond compare the most competent man for the position of Senior Secretary at the Mission House. His speech in accepting the appointment was characteristic in a high degree. He said, " In accepting as cheerfully and as gratefully as I do this appointment, I wish to say that I was no candidate for the office. I hoped that some of the brethren who wished to *keep me in my place* would have found a proper person, and that I should have gone to Leeds, where I was pledged, and where for many domestic reasons, I wished to go."

Being deprived, to meet a Connexional demand, of such a minister as Jabez Bunting, the Leeds East people were allowed to make their choice. They fixed on *Joseph Fowler*, who spent there three happy, prosperous, effective years. Mr. Bunting, by this appointment, became permanently fixed in London, which seemed his proper *habitat*. Here he spent the best quarter of a century of a long and intense and highly influential life, at the very focus of all the Methodist activity and of British enterprise. And of that centre of Methodist activity he himself became the centre, and that by the living weight of his own powerful personality and capacity for *affairs*, and passion for *affairs*, and unmatchable assiduity in attention to affairs. As his biographer says, he was, during all this time, "taking a chief part, not only in foreign affairs, but in every department of Methodism" (p. 647).

Dr. Alder had just given signal proof of his capacity by the most successful accomplishment of a difficult mission of unification in Canada, where amidst intense political and ecclesiastical excitement, he had welded together the two rival Methodist bodies, the Wesleyan Methodists and the Methodist Episcopal Church, reconciling all the old outstanding difficulties ; and in the

course of his negotiations had received so much attention, hospitality, and deference, from the Governor of Upper Canada, Sir John Colton, that the Missionary Committee felt bound to transmit to his Excellency a vote of thanks. The leading Canadian Methodist, Mr. Ryerson, returned with Dr. Alder, bringing a plan of Union between the Canadian and the British Conference, requesting that a general Superintendent should be sent out from England, and that Dr. Alder should be the first President of their Conference.

Mr. Bunting maintained that the financial part of the question belonged to the Committee of Review, the Ecclesiastical and disciplinary part to the Conference. "What weighs with me is--if we do not take them up they must fall. The United States have voted them £500 a year on consideration of their civilising work among the Indians."

Mr. Marsden was appointed President of the Canadian Conference. In accepting the appointment he assured the Conference: "I shall stick to the instructions which the Conference has agreed upon. I shall return as speedily as possible. *For nearly forty years I have never been absent from my circuit for a week together except at Conference.*"

Dr. Bunting: "The Union was most important, expedient, and desirable. I am the last man to put religion at the feet of men of the world; but I do not belong to that party of Dissenters who refuse all countenance of Government to unshackled, pure Ecclesiastical authority and power. If religious instruction be communicated from this country, Government would look more favourably on it." He illustrated the advantage of placing the whole under the British Conference by the example of Ireland. "I would advocate it on *patriotic grounds. There is no cement like religion.* If we fail we have done no harm. I had some fear lest there should be a great secession and some feeling respecting a political tone, but Mr. Ryerson has satisfied us on both points. I am not very particular respecting the mode of Church government. I do not care if a preacher calls his Superintendent 'Bishop'; I have been so called. I do not believe in any Divine right of Episcopacy; *I would have purity of doctrine.*"

The Chapel Fund Report gave a very cheering account of the working of a new plan for paying off debt. On this,

Mr. Bunting remarked: "This shows that we have got over the worst." At a previous Session Mr. Bunting had animadverted strongly on Messrs. McLean and Rowland. He now said: "I beg to be heard a moment, as I have had my feelings specially consulted. I would apologise to Brother McLean and Brother Rowland for having expressed myself so as to give them pain."

Mr. Stanley complained of "an innovation in the Bath Circuit. A whole verse was sung at once at the request or dictate of the organist."

Mr. Bunting: "I most decidedly object to the dictation of an organist. I think on a Sunday evening the middle hymn, if well known, such as 'Come, ye that love the Lord,' might be sung without giving out."

*The Plan of Education for the Methodist Ministry* was again before the Conference.

Mr. Bunting said: "We must attempt this on a large scale, not nibble at it any longer. A plan of examination of young preachers as to what they read is very good, but not all. It is desirable to come a little nearer together in judgment. Former meetings have been deterred by the expense and want of union. I move: 'That a Committee be appointed to meet in London some brethren from the country.' We must not care about a little expense. Should the Committee prove abortive it will be to be regretted. I hope we shall be in earnest. In Ireland they recommend that a school for Methodist youths should be established. They complain of being obliged to send their children to clergymen or Dissenting ministers, where they may get a good deal of learning, but not a very warm heart towards Methodism. Five gentlemen in Manchester will give £100. One of them will undertake all risks; he thinks we may accomplish two objects in one."

Mr. Bromley: "I doubt the expediency of the plan. To divide the attention of our people between two systems may be hurtful. I think the times are moving; I do not know whether right or not, I have some doubt, but I think the University where Mr. Wesley got his education would be acceptable if we could get at it. I think we should have two classes of ministry, educated and otherwise. I think, too, our past system has worked well. Our uneducated fathers succeeded beyond most educated men."

Mr. R. Waddy: "I think our Connexion is already sufficiently burdened with collections. I think too, in the selection of ministers we do not go down to the lowest, but select them of some education. I approve of a school for the children of our people, but should be sorry to have young preachers at them."

On reading the Obituary of Daniel Isaac,

Mr. Bunting: "I would express my entire concurrence with the Character drawn up by Mr. Bromley. I admire the manner in which it is drawn up as well as the man whose Character it is. It is well known that there was a difference of opinion between us on some matters. He thought we differed much more than we really did. We have been more acquainted in later life. I was much pleased with him." Dr. Beaumont testified to his "uncommon faithfulness."

This was indeed true of Daniel Isaac's preaching. He was a fearless and relentless detective and castigator of the sins alike of professor and profane.

"Mr. Treffry observed that whilst he laboured in Leeds, it was said he drove all dishonourable men of business out of both circuits. In his preaching he made sin and error look ridiculous." Mr. Calder attempted to speak, but was too much affected to proceed. "Mr. Waterhouse alluded to the *tenderness* which was blended with his *faithfulness*. He always guarded against using *Scripture lightly*. He gave his colleagues free access to his rich library." Many more wished to speak, but were not allowed for lack of time.

Fine testimony was also borne to the venerable Duncan McAllum.

Mr. Atherton: "He was a most extraordinary and eminent man." Mr. Stephens confirmed this statement.

Mr. Bunting: "Dr. Clarke once said to me, pointing to Mr. McAllum, 'See that man, he is a walking lexicon.'"

Mr. McLean said: "Mr. McAllum had more correct views of what is likely to promote religion in Scotland than any other man I ever conversed with."

When the question was under discussion: "What Supernumeraries are to be re-admitted to the work?"

Mr. Bunting remarked: "If a man cannot do the work, he has a providential release from the itinerancy. The expense of supplies for invalided preachers (almost a new item) amounts to many hundreds a year." He added: "I do not wish my name to be so often repeated for mere rhetorical embellishment. If I am the butt out of doors, I do not wish to be the butt of this Conference. I wish I had a cottage in the wilderness. I am sick to nausea at the frequent allusion to my name."

When the *Manchester District* was reached, the Secretary after putting the question, called the attention of the Conference to a very peculiar case which was commented on amongst our people, and one which he thought it high time for the Conference to pronounce its judgment upon. Mr. Everett was carrying on a thriving business in Manchester, and at the same time with his name on the Minutes as a Supernumerary Minister, who had the appearance and the habit of a man in robust health, and was, as a matter of fact, doing an amount of preaching and platform speaking, which involved a larger expenditure of energy, and of exposure in coach-travelling by night, and in the winter, than any ordinary circuit work entailed. This had been going on for eleven years, and as they had now the advantage of Mr. Everett's presence in the Conference, he asked leave to appeal to him, as to whether or not he was physically able to return to circuit work?

Mr. Everett replied: "I have not for some time had any return of my old complaint. I could preach every Sabbath, but do not know what the week-night work might do."

Mr. Reece said: "I think it would not be well to take him out. If his health breaks down in a year or two, he may not recover his business."

Mr. Bromley: "I have a strong objection to his leaving his business, which is prosperous. I believe he cannot stand the work of an itinerant."

Mr. Sutcliffe: "I think he ought either to come out or to decline taking any of our money from the Preachers' Fund."

Mr. Bunting: "I feel obliged to Mr. Sutcliffe for saying what so many think."

Mr. Everett explained that what he received from the Preachers' Fund went to "the support of his mother."

Mr. Bunting: "This case is an anomaly. Many laymen ask, 'Why admit Mr. Everett into all the privileges of the ministry, when he is as really a tradesman and a shopkeeper as any layman in the Body?' This cannot be defended on principle. We cannot exclude the other Methodist men in trade and business. We cannot defend their exclusion. His high and lofty notions have placed him in a most anomalous situation. I think that none but separated men should have a seat and vote among us. A man should be either one thing or another. I would put an end to such anomalies. Mr. Everett would be acceptable in any circuit, and may have his choice."

Mr. E. returned to circuit work.

The Conference little thought what a fateful act it was performing when it decided to retain Mr. Griffith on probation, after all his manifestations of untamable individualism and insubordination, and his eager politics, and despite the warnings of such men as Beaumont, Reece, and Bunting. And Mr. Bunting had no idea what he was providing for himself and Methodism when he moved that Mr. Everett should be required to leave his shop in Manchester and return to circuit work, and that despite the forecasts of such men as Reece again, and Bromley. Surely the Conference should have at least left to Everett himself the responsibility of the alternative between giving up his shop or giving up his status as a Wesleyan Methodist minister. He had distinctly stated that, in his own judgment, to take the full circuit work week-day as well as Sunday would be a risk.

Mr. Bunting blamed Mr. Stanley for entering the office of the *Christian Advocate*.

Mr. Stanley: "I disapprove of its spirit. I have written and spoken against it. Those who have made the statement to produce a certain effect are unworthy of my esteem. The case is this: Some fifteen weeks ago, at a Book Committee, Mr. Moore suggested that it was necessary to read the *Christian Advocate*. Messrs. Entwisle, Cubitt, and Dixon approved of this. I knew that Mr. Mason read it regularly. I thought: How can I obtain it in the most quiet way? I have no love to error. In passing the office I ordered the paper, but did not sit down."

It is necessary to explain that Mr. Stanley was expected to be elected to the Chair of Conference that year, and the fact of his having ordered the *Advocate* was made as much of as possible by his opponents to divert the votes in another direction. No doubt it transferred many votes from Mr. Stanley to Mr. Taylor. Mr. Stanley had 99 votes; Mr. Taylor 128.

Mr. Bunting: "I think no Methodist preacher should take in the *Advocate* paper. The paper attacks our great principles. I do not care personally.

I despise it too much. I think Mr. Entwisle, Mr. Dixon, or anybody did wrong in going into the printer's shop. No man should subscribe to the paper. I differ from Mr. Stanley in what he calls 'the quiet way.' I call it *the notorious and ostentatious way*. He should have applied to a newsvendor. I dissent from Mr. Stanley in spending much time in reading infidel publications. (Mr. Stanley said he did not.) I have made up my mind on the subject of Christianity, and I do not expect to see as profound, though I may as subtle, publications against it. I have the best, the experimental proof of the truth. I think the reading of this publication tends to defile the mind. It is not quite safe perhaps for Mr. Stanley to read it. Impressions have been made that he is in league with the *Advocate*. I never said so. But, if we must not speak out, why have we talked about this business at all? We are called not to a privilege to vote, but to execute a solemn trust. I did vote against Mr. Stanley's election to the Presidency. The ballot is only a covert for knaves. I hope the time may come when I can vote for Mr. Stanley. I did not a little to prevent his election. The reason why was: the *Advocate* had taken upon it to dictate to us a President, and we thought it necessary to make a stand on public grounds."

Mr. W. Smith: "I think we should require the Book Steward to withdraw his name as a subscriber."

Mr. Bunting: "I think so too. And if there is here some leaky, treacherous brother, as in the last Conference, I hope that he will communicate among other things to the *Advocate* that Mr. Stanley said it was 'a villainous paper.' I would have Mr. Mason give it up. I would not read it. *The Circular* is put down. I would not allow any man to tell me what was in it."

Mr. Mason: "I cannot withdraw my name, for I am not a subscriber. I do occasionally purchase it in my official character, as I purchase the *Protestant Methodist Magazine*, etc."

Mr. Atherton: "I am most surprised at the mental appetite of such as can sit down and gorge the mangled bleeding characters of their brethren, whom they address as 'My dear Brother.'" Mr. Mason promised to give it up.

The unfortunate missionary who had been docked of nine out of his nineteen years of service in the West Indies, for coming home at half price instead of waiting for the formal permission of the Mission House, requested to become a Supernumerary because his memory has failed and he is obliged to read his sermons, etc. Permission was not granted.

The Missionary Secretaries complained of Thomas Collins for "declining to go abroad."

Mr. Bunting: "These departures from engagement are frequent and dishonourable. However, I hope he will not be given to the Missions. He would not suit us. I trust he will be looked after as to his zeal for the home-work. Let him not think that we are satisfied with him. We think him defective in zeal.

"There are two kinds of jilting among us—jilting young females and jilting the Missionary Committee. We do not intend to be married to those who have jilted us."

How odd it sounds to hear the young Boanerges, Thomas Collins, described



as "defective in zeal." But Mr. Coley, in his "Life of Collins," shows most clearly that Mr. Collins did not decline to go to the West Indies. What he did was to frankly state to the Conference through the Committee the altered facts of his case, and to leave it wholly to the judgment of the Conference whether he should go or stay.

Alas ! there seemed to be at this time an epidemic of "jilting" misses as well as jilting missions. One of the former cases has in it an episode with a romantic dash. The case was well known to Mr. Bunting, who therefore naturally took the keener interest in the matter. The lady in the case was the daughter of, at that time, a prosperous farmer, who was also a very popular local preacher. Mr. Bunting, for a series of years, was accustomed to preach anniversary sermons at the place. The jilted young lady was much superior to the man who jilted her in education, position, manners, and in character. His conduct towards her was, by general consent, disgracefully shabby. But he offered himself for the foreign work, married, and went abroad. Then the matter came to the knowledge of the *Christian Advocate*, which was always sniffing about hungrily for something to discredit the Mission House and hurt its funds. The matter was detailed in such wise as to evade the law of libel, yet cast the greatest odium on the Missionary Secretaries. He had to be recalled, tried, found guilty of frivolous and unprincipled treatment of a young lady, and was put back on the list of reserve ; for Conference has always been very strict on such matters. Mr. Bunting showed great faithfulness and tenderness. But such and so varied is the perversity of human nature, even in its better specimens, three other promising neophytes had rushed to the other extreme, and married in the midst of their probation. The wives in these cases were widows with families. The first case occasioned a very lively conversation. It is very humorously related, and caused some merriment.

Messrs. Sutcliffe, Reece, and Bunting bore very hard on the offenders ; they thought it no laughing matter.

Mr. Entwisle : " Mr. Edmondson, afterwards President, applied for permission to marry in his third year. A Committee was appointed to consider his case. The Committee did not sit. The probationer took silence for consent, married, and was *suspended*."

Mr. Bromley : " Is the rule constructed on financial principles, or some other ? "

Mr. Reece : " I understand it to have some regard to finances, but also to the ministerial character of the young men."

Mr. Bromley : " I think if in anything we look towards Rome it is in this matter of celibacy."

The President: "I will allow Mr. Bromley to move an alteration in the rule, but not to speak against it."

Mr. Moore: "Lady Huntingdon made it a rule that if any of her preachers married they should provide for themselves, and Mr. Charles Wesley wished the same rule to be adopted; but Mr. Wesley said the farthest he could go was to keep them single whilst on trial. Some said this was a doctrine of devils, but Mr. Wesley kept to his rule."

On this point the venerable octogenarian's memory failed him. It seems strange that he should have lost sight of the case of Mr. Kilham. Wesley allowed him to marry in the midst of his probation, on receiving the assurance that his wife could and would provide for herself, and on the guarantee that no Connexional or Circuit Fund should be a whit the poorer for the indulgence granted him.

Mr. Dixon: "Shall we attach penalties to the rule? I doubt the propriety of this. Cases should be dealt with as they occur. If a penalty is inflicted upon all alike, it must be unjust to some. I doubt whether this can be done in accordance with the Scriptures. In some circumstances it is not a crime to marry."

Nevertheless, marrying whilst on trial for the ministry was treated as of equal guilt to the most frivolous and heartless jilting, without the least regard to the providential position of the parties.

Mr. Bunting: "I am the last man to draw general conclusions from particular premises, but the devil is assailing the young men of this Connexion in a particular way. I lament the tremendous evil of young men living out of the house of their Superintendents."

Mr. Anderson: "Was any notice taken in the Liverpool District of a brother who had introduced into a chapel in Liverpool a petition in favour of Church and State, in opposition to the Radical petitions?"

Mr. McNicoll: "Mr. W. B. Stephenson had exhorted the people to sign such a petition without his Superintendent's consent. He acknowledged this, and it was agreed that there should be no record."

It was found that secessions had occurred in five strong circuits: Bolton, Halifax, Burslem, Oldham, and Ashton, and the brethren—Sykes, Crowther, Sutcliffe, and Campbell, and another—were accused of having created or allowed disturbances in Manchester First, Todmorden, Brighton, Holmfirth, and Durham. As to Bolton, "The conduct of the Superintendent was highly approved of." Messrs. Galland and W. M. Bunting were pronounced to have handled the very trying Halifax disturbance with great judgment and ability. The Burslem Trustees had made a charge against the Superintendent, the cheerful and kind-hearted Thomas Harris, of being the cause of the division. But the Conference declared him to be fully justified in having made

a stand against Radicalism ; but he was recommended to be prudent in his manner of endeavouring to improve the religious character of his flock. At his request Messrs. Reece, Marsden, and S. Jackson were appointed to visit Burslem.

The Superintendent of Oldham was declared to have acted properly. Thus a carefully graduated approbation was awarded to judicious disciplinarians. The Superintendent of Todmorden was shrewdly called in question for employing in his circuit an eager, active agitator. Mr. Crowther was exculpated for having introduced the same man to the pulpit at Oldham Street, Manchester. Brother Campbell, of Holmfirth, had taken part in a political meeting, but it turned out such a droll affair that no serious notice could be taken of it. The venerable Joseph Sutcliffe had taken the chair at one of these meetings at Brighton, but had made a good Methodistical speech about something else, and with a candour worthy of his age, had promised to do so no more.

One brother called a Minor District Meeting on another brother for something he had said in Conference.

Mr. Bunting : " That should be guarded against, it might lead to evil."

Mr. Pilter inquired : " When a matter is *settled* in a District Meeting, must it be brought forward at Conference ? "

The President : " Whatever comes before the District should be reported at Conference."

Mr. Methley : " I protest against the doctrine that every conversation at District Meeting must be detailed at the Conference."

Mr. Bunting : " I charge the Sheffield District Meeting with giving a false report in saying that there had been ' no objection.' "

Mr. Reece : " The case was simply this. My colleague, Mr. Dunn, made, the night before, I may not call it a charge, but Mr. M. would bring it before the District Meeting." The unanimous opinion of the meeting was that Mr. Dunn did wrong in taking the part he did in a meeting held at Cutlers' Hall. So far as can be gathered from the conversation in Conference, Mr. McLean had promoted and spoken at a meeting in favour of the union of Church and State, in which meeting Mr. Dunn, his junior colleague, had taken part, but on the other side. The latter in the course of his remarks had made some observations which the former felt to be an impeachment of his character, which he found it necessary to vindicate. The District Meeting thought that Mr. Dunn did wrong in reflecting on his senior colleague in the Cutlers' Hall, after having let slip the opportunity of remonstrating with him in private, and thus avoiding the unseemliness of a public collision between two popular Methodist ministers who were in the same circuit.

Mr. Bromley " thought Mr. Dunn had done wrong, but called attention to the rule ' That no brother should be arraigned before the Conference without a copy of the charge.' " He thought Mr. Bunting's action " irregular."

Mr. Dunn : " If any more be said about these matters I must claim the right to go into the full case."

Mr. Bunting : " The District Meeting is only a Committee; everything said or done should be, in some form, brought before the Conference. We must guard against the infringement of the rights of Conference. I would conclude with a motion : ' That there shall be a record in the District Meeting, and if the Conference think proper they may call for an inquiry and the record be forthcoming.' "

A generally mild, well-meaning brother was charged with having held an anti-State Church meeting in our chapel in Durham, in defiance of all the efforts of his Superintendent to prevent it. A disturbance in the society was the natural result. He was admonished from the Chair. It was reported that the Newcastle East and Gateshead Circuits had in like manner been greatly agitated, whilst Newcastle West was quiet. Mr. Naylor asked, how this came about ? Mr. Bunting sensibly submitted whether this and other cases of the kind had not better be postponed ? Agreed. The Superintendent of the Whitehaven Circuit was charged with having made a highly objectionable speech at a meeting held in our chapel. Mr. Bromley : " I understand that no brother in the house has seen a copy of the speech, but through the medium of the *Christian Advocate*. I would ask, Is it Conference consistence, first to denounce the *Advocate*, and then to found an accusation on its evidence ? " Mr. Lord : " I saw the speech both in a Whitehaven and a Nottingham newspaper."

Mr. Bunting : " I object to this lawyer-like way of proceeding in a matter of ecclesiastical discipline. We have a right to send for him and require that he plainly and untechnically answer our questions, and if he do not give us satisfaction, dismiss him from the body."

It was a far cry from London to Whitehaven and back before any of the great northward lines of railway were as yet laid ; and it was no light contingency for the Contingent Fund to pay his expenses forth and again. Nevertheless, he had to take this trip to town without delay. The President demanded from him an account of the meeting and his speech.

Mr. Atherton : " Is it fair to require the prisoner to furnish the charge ? "

Mr. Bunting : " It is fair among us. We are not a court of law, but a body of ministers."

Mr. Hudson : " I made a speech, but it has been caricatured."

Mr. Bunting : " The brethren who spoke out last week should come forward and substantiate their statements. The speech appeared in the *Patriot*. Let it be procured and prove or disprove. A man gains nothing in this Connexion by standing on points of law. Let him deal frankly."

Mr. Hudson handed up a copy of his speech, which was read. It was more humorous than offensive ; excepting that it was made by a Methodist preacher in a Methodist chapel.

Mr. Newton and Mr. Marsden condemned the speech in the strongest terms.

Mr. Bromley said : " This brings my own sin to my remembrance. In

Brunswick Chapel, Leeds, I compared the Church of England to an old lady. I ought to be arraigned along with Mr. Hudson."

The President : " Mr. Bromley is not before us."

Mr. Bunting : " Yes, he is, by his own showing. Mr. Bromley ought not to have descended to such an irregularity. If the Church of England is the daughter of the Church of Rome, then we are the grand-daughter. These are ridiculous attempts at wit. We must condemn them."

Mr. Hudson : " Have not similar meetings been held in other chapels? "

Mr. Reece : " The Methodists have from the beginning respected that part of the British Constitution."

Mr. Hudson : " I acknowledge I did wrong."

The President : " Will you refrain from agitating in future? "

Mr. Hudson : " Yes."

Mr. Bunting " thought that the Yarmouth affair ought to be inquired into."

It seemed that here, too, under the Superintendency of William Griffith, *senior*, a similar meeting had taken place : but the Conference had had enough of the subject.

Mr. Hudson lived to lay his son on the lap of the " old lady," as a devoted parish priest.

Next came on the celebrated case of Joseph Rayner Stephens. This has been so amply chronicled from Mr. Stephens' point of view, by his friend Holyoake, and from the Conference point of view in Smith's " History of Methodism," and in the " Life of Dr. Bunting," especially, as to render unnecessary more than a few introductory sentences, before we throw upon the page of history the additional light which rays out from the discussions in the Conference on this critical case.

Joseph Rayner Stephens was the second son of the stout old ex-President, John Stephens, whom we have seen to be, next to Mr. Bunting himself, the most unbending champion of Authority that the Methodist Connexion could produce. Joseph Stephens' elder brother was that pugnacious notoriety, the Editor of the *Christian Advocate*, whose dissonant and threatening "*Pibroch*" had " thrilled through " every circuit in the land. Joseph was, like all the rest of the family, a well-endowed and fascinating personality. But like his journalising brother, he was, by temperament and habit, hot, heady, hazardous, restless, and intractable. These powerful weaknesses had been nurtured into revolutionary passion by four years' residence at Stockholm as the solitary Methodist missionary in Sweden, where he had formed some very heterogeneous friendships with adventurous men of genius. This circle was enlarged on his return by several romantic natures, such as Harrison Ainsworth, the novelist. In the ninth year of

his ministry, 1834, being stationed at Ashton-under-Lyne, he, at a public meeting for inaugurating a society for the *Separation of the Church from the State*, delivered a lengthened and impassioned speech, though in a state of health unfit for circuit work. He proclaimed in his opening sentence his consciousness of acting inconsistently with his position as a Wesleyan Methodist minister. At the same time he produced a manifesto bearing the signatures of more than a hundred office-bearers and leading members of the Wesleyan Methodist Society in Ashton. He moved the insertion of the words "of the Wesleyan Methodists" in the preamble of the Memorial issued by the meeting. At a subsequent meeting he moved the first resolution, and accepted office as one of the secretaries of the *Church Separation Society*. He also attended public meetings of the kind in other circuits, and systematically announced both petitions and public meetings from the Methodist pulpits wherein he was appointed to preach. This he did in utter disregard of the judgment of his Superintendent, the genial George Marsland, an admirable Methodist preacher, whose death in middle life was a sad bereavement to the Methodist Connexion.

This agitation naturally gave great offence to a majority of the most influential Methodists in the large towns of that thickly-peopled district, especially in Manchester and Stockport. The Chairman of the District, Robert Newton, was beset with deputations and with protests against this perversion of Methodist chapels to the purposes of agitation, and the diversion of the time, energy, and zeal of a Methodist minister from the work for which he was set apart and supported, to a propagandism offensive to a large number of the members of our Church. It is important to note that the initiative in the proceedings against Stephens was taken by the laity, in the exercise of their just and guaranteed rights as Church members and contributors to the Church funds. They declared themselves ready to substantiate their charges against Stephens. The Chairman notified these charges to the young minister, who demanded the most strict legal procedure in the matter. Mr. Newton suggested that instead of the commotion of a minor District Meeting, it would be better in every way to have the matter settled by his brethren at the ordinary District Meeting, which was due shortly. To this young Stephens could not but assent. This and the following important details came out in the Conference investigations, and was admitted by him to be exactly true.

The Chairman informed Mr. Stephens at the District Meeting: "We are not here to pronounce upon the abstract question of Church and State, but to express a judgment on Mr. Stephens' public acts as a Wesleyan Methodist minister. Mr. Stephens denied the right of the District Meeting to interfere in the affair. We required, first, that he should relinquish his secretaryship in the *Church Separation Society*, and gave him more than a day to consider his reply. He told us distinctly that he would not give up any of his practices. In a public speech he had denounced the liturgy used in so many of our chapels on the recommendation of Wesley and the Conference. We wished him to avoid such deliverances in the future. The meeting was unanimous in voting his suspension, after his distinct refusal to consent to this requirement."

Mr. Everett: "Mr. Stephens did not make it a matter of *conscience*, which was a relief to us in the District Meeting. The District Meeting simply required him to abstain in the future from public agitation of the question. We did not require a pledge. It was put in the form of a prohibition, and I desired him not to refuse; but his voice was loud: 'I will not give up.'"

Mr. Bowers: "Mr. Stephens had an opportunity of making a defence, but refused. The District did its utmost to prevent a sentence against him. On the second day he discovered a softened emotion. We thought a prohibition enough, but we were outgeneralled. He positively refused even to give up his secretaryship."

Mr. Bunting: "Was his suspension for refusing to acknowledge the authority of the meeting and refusing to give up for the future his agitation practices?"

It was answered: "*Exclusively so.*"

Mr. Ward: "Did not Mr. Stephens consent to give up on condition that certain resolutions should be withdrawn?"

It was answered: "Yes."

Dr. Warren: "I proposed at the District Meeting that we should not deal with Mr. Stephens as a culprit, on the express condition that he should give up his secretaryship and abstain from attending anti-State Church meetings in the future. I endeavoured to show him the propriety of this by pointing out that he had broken our law. But Mr. Stephens was inflexible. The only point about which I demurred was the extremity of the sentence."

Mr. Squance: "When Mr. Stephens refused to assent to the prohibition of the meeting, Dr. Warren lifted up his hands and said: 'It is impossible to save him.'"

Mr. Woolsey: "Mr. Stephens declared that he was under no obligation to continue the secretaryship which he refused to relinquish."

Mr. James Wood: "Is Mr. Stephens sorry for his conduct? Will he abstain in future? and will he throw himself on the mercy of the Conference?"

Mr. Entwisle: "A satisfactory answer to these questions would meet the wishes of the brethren."

Mr. J. R. Stephens: "I wish to clear myself from contumacious conduct. Up to last January we were all in harmony."

His main defence was the time-eaten sophism that he had done these things, though a Wesleyan Methodist minister, in his

*private* capacity ; that his Superintendent had not "prohibited" or "*warned* him against" attending the *first* meeting, but merely told him that he "had better not go."

Mr. S. proceeded : "I did not understand him as speaking in his official capacity, finding from the public prints that the brethren were attending meetings on the question of different kinds. I had no intimation from anybody that I had done wrong, till within three weeks of the District Meeting. I must request letters to be read, which I addressed to Mr. Newton, as they have been pronounced as 'intimidatory.'" The letters were read, as also a long and prosy speech reported in a Manchester paper.

When Mr. Stephens resumed, he was interrupted.

Mr. Atherton : "I complain of Mr. Stephens being interrupted. I think he may justly say that he has not been mildly and patiently heard."

Mr. Moore : "Except the members of the Manchester District (to which the interrupter belonged) we are all judges and should be cool."

Mr. J. R. Stephens : "At the District Meeting it was said the question of the separation of Church and State was not to be debated there. If the Conference confirm the doctrine of the District Meeting I beg to withdraw myself from the Body. It has been correctly reported that I had no *conscience* in the matter. If the two resolutions were withdrawn, I would give up the Secretaryship. (Cries of "Hear! Hear!" on which Mr. Bunting rose, and objected.) I believe that Mr. Wesley and I have contended for one and the same thing. I acknowledge the kindness of my fathers and brethren at the District Meeting. I was not reckless of consequences. I have read the articles in the Magazine, of course. Whether the Conference decide *pro* or *con*, so long as I hold Mr. Wesley's doctrine in my hand, I shall propagate it as my talents will permit. I did deny the authority of the District Meeting to bind me down. I deny it now. I am prepared to answer any question."

The bare quoting of the resolutions to which Mr. Stephens referred will show clearly why he was so anxious for their deletion, and why the meeting could not give them up without stultifying their proceedings, and returning a verdict of "We find him not guilty, and hope he won't do so any more." They contain the whole significance of the affair and the whole gist and gravamen of the charge.

"The speeches of Mr. Stephens are directly at variance with the general sentiments of Mr. Wesley and the Conference, and are distinguished by a spirit highly unbecoming a Wesleyan minister, etc."

"So far as his influence extends Brother Stephens has committed the Connexion on a question involving its public credit as well as its internal tranquillity, by the very active and persistent part that he had taken in the aggressive proceedings adopted by the meetings referred to."

Mr. Bunting : "I would ask whether he would admit all the resolutions but two?" His reply was not very intelligible.

Mr. Bunting : "It was only speeches and proceedings of Mr. Stephens



that were pronounced upon, not his opinions. Was he allowed to defend his public speeches and proceedings?"

"Yes."

Mr. Stephens admitted that the District Meeting was not the place to settle the abstract question.

Mr. W. M. Bunting: "Is Mr. Stephens' objection to the retraction of his sentiments, or to the discontinuing of his public acts?"

This is very interesting as the first instance in which that clear, firm, musical voice was audible in Conference debate. He had attempted to speak once before, but, no doubt from trepidation, was unable to make himself heard.

Mr. Stephens: "I consider the District Meeting recorded, as Wesleyan law, what is not so, and on that account decline."

Mr. Dixon: "Did the District Meeting forbid Mr. Stephens to justify his *proceedings* by an appeal to Wesley?"

Mr. Stephens: "It was distinctly declared that the separation of Church and State was an anti-Wesleyan notion. I objected to this statement."

Dr. Beaumont: "I have heard that extracts from Crowther's Minutes were read in the District Meeting. Had Mr. Stephens liberty to read on his side?"

"Yes, he was *challenged* to do so."

Mr. Stephens: "The finding did not prove the separation of Church and State to be anti-Wesleyan."

Mr. Ward: "Did any preacher write or speak to Mr. Stephens after his first speech?" Mr. Stephens: "No." Mr. Everett and Mr. Bowers both answered that they had spoken to him on the subject. Mr. Stephens: "I recollect those conversations, but I do not remember that anything was said about the violation of law. My conduct was denounced as foolish, and injurious to the Connexion."

Mr. Marsland was asked if he said anything on the subject to Mr. Stephens between the first and second meeting. He proceeded to explain in detail that Mr. Stephens' transactions in other Methodist matters were such as to preclude all friendly intercourse between them. The Conference became impatient, and would not hear him out.

Mr. Bunting: "From my long and reverential regard for the father, I regret that I must come to an unfavourable conclusion on the case. In my endeavours to disentangle the case three or four things are found admitted. He attended meetings to obtain by any constitutional means the separation of the Church and State; constitutional means to do what is itself unconstitutional! 2. That he proposed to introduce the word "Wesleyans" into the memorial. 3. That he announced from the pulpit, against the voice of his Superintendent, that a petition against Church and State was lying in the vestry for signature. On these findings had the District Meeting ground to suspend him? I think they had, particularly in the present state of things. We have heard of chapels occupied by such meetings, and of resolutions at quarterly meetings. There is danger to the character of Methodism, which in strength is better than numbers. If this thing goes on it may become a grave matter of inquiry, a matter of conscience, with me to go to studies which I have long since intermitted—the study of

Schism. I appeal to Superintendents, who have had the care of circuits, to whom the Conference has committed the people. They must have the responsibility, and not their helpers. And what right had Mr. Stephens to go into other circuits and embarrass other brethren in their work and administration? The notoriety of the thing aggravated the offence and involved the Wesleyan Methodist Connexion. Mr. Stephens ought to have expressed regret at such conduct, and then, out of respect to his father, himself, and his talents, it might have been overlooked. If our pulpits are to be the vehicle of such announcements, a serious question will arise whether some of us can continue in the Body. The requirement of the District Meeting to abstain from these courses was what a young man of such a few years' standing had no right to refuse to do."

Assuredly, our societies and congregations and the trustees of our chapels were entitled to be protected from such agitating practices, and secured against such perversions of Connexional property to purposes for which the trust deeds make no pretence of provision. If the courts of law and equity, as well as the Conference, could not redress this gross injustice, then a vast secession would have been the inevitable result, a secession led by ministers such as Bunting, Newton, Entwisle, Anderson, and Hannah. These would have been followed by our choicest laymen; the most respected, generous, cultivated families in Methodism. There would not have been a single thousand pounds subscribed to the Centenary Fund. The Centenary Celebration, four years later, if attempted at all would have been a pitiable failure instead of a signal and most splendid epoch in the chronicles of liberality. What if every young cometary genius or every "runaway young star or two" be left at liberty to form an orbit for himself!

Mr. Bunting: "Our question is not whether at the beginning it was best to unite Church and State, nor whether if the house had to be constructed now, it should be just as it is; our point is: Must Wesleyan Methodist ministers arm themselves with pickaxes, and pull down the house in which our father was born, and in which he thought he died. He might be in delirium, but the thought consoled his mind. Let us not take off our hand from the work he has left us to complete and lay it destructively upon that adjoining house, even though it be an eyesore. We can live in our own house and do as we please. Remember, when we gave our people the sacrament in our own chapels, we publicly guarded against its being taken as a sign of separation. For the Conference to join the agitation against Church and State would require a new constitution; and *we have no right to alter the constitution without calling a Convention*. But what should we gain by so doing?"

At this point the clock struck the inevitable hour for closing that day's session; and as Mr. Bunting paused, such an outburst of

assent resounded through John Wesley's Chapel as no previous Conference had ever heard.

When the Conference re-assembled the next morning at six o'clock, the time-honoured John Reynolds rose and objected to "the burst of applause which took place yesterday on the delivery of Mr. Bunting's speech. The matter was too serious for such outbreaks."

Mr. Bunting took up his parable again: "I would not abuse the kindness of the Conference. It is unfortunate for myself that I was interrupted. I may best recover myself by stating that I think we ought to alter the phraseology as this Conference may please. It is best to divide the record under four heads:

"1. The facts of the case are proved by Mr. Stephens' own admission or by evidence. He denies that he *consulted* his Superintendent. But that step he was bound to take. Before taking any public step, he was bound to take the official, authorised opinion of his Superintendent. 2. By introducing 'the Wesleyan Methodists' into a memorial of no mild or moderate character, he has violated the peaceable and unsectarian spirit of Wesleyan Methodists, whether his views be right or not. We Methodist ministers, whatever be our private view, give up public agitation. I have heard it said: '*Where is the law?*' and where is *Wesley's platform?*' We meet, not as a court of law; we must not ask where is the statute? ours is a court of equity. A law that provides for every malversation could not be administered. There will always be found men who will be quibbling about statutes. We are to look at the whole character of Methodism. The memory of the man in the tomb behind is law to us. Keep up the spirit of Methodism. But there is *statute law*. The Minutes of 1820 contain this. Mr. Stephens has broken the law. As to Wesley's sermon about Constantine, it was a particular establishment, not the principle of an establishment, that Wesley there refers to. I maintain that it is the most unjust thing in the world to cull out a passage, not in the standards, and say: 'This is Mr. Wesley.' The point is, what did he *do*? Did he attend meetings to agitate against the Established Church? Would not Mr. Wesley have sent home any man who did this? Mr. Wesley dissented by employing lay-ministers, but he maintained a friendliness to the Church. He was nearer to the Church than to Dissent. And this is our proper position practically. Perhaps we should be neutral. I hold in my hand a letter of Charles Wesley's, in which he says: 'All the difference between my brother and me is, *my brother is first for the Methodists, then for the Church*; I am first for the Church, and then for the Methodists.' So is our plan. We can feel what a bishop or a clergyman says, but they will not draw us nearer, because we have not gone one step farther than our Methodism requires. Some will not go so far; they have a right to their private views. We are the best Methodists when we imitate the spirit of John Wesley. Some have not attained this—I can love a Methodist who is not exactly with me; we must not say, first Methodism and then *Dissent*. Are those to exercise forbearance who are nearest to Wesley, in respect to the liturgy, etc. Our principle is '*Dissent when we must*, but be on friendly terms when we can.' Mr. Wesley would never have signed a petition against the

Establishment. I agree with Mr. Reynolds on the *seriousness* of this business. Mr. Stephens was not called upon to approve of the resolutions, that would have been tyranny; they required him to abstain from agitation with the Connexion. That was an act of authority. He ought to have submitted. This point we cannot give up. The time has come when we must say what we are, must say *yes* or *no*. We must determine whether we will keep our position of forbearance towards Dissent. In a District Meeting young ministers, as well as old, must defer to the collective judgment of the brethren."

(A general cry from the Conference: "He ought to have submitted.") "What then ought the District to do when he *would not* submit? He wanted the District to construct for him a bridge by which he might retreat. I maintain that his suspension was just, and rendered unavoidable by himself. I move that the Conference—

"(1) Confirm the action of the District Meeting. (2) Requires Mr. Stephens to give a pledge to *give himself up to his proper work as a Methodist minister in the future*. If he refuse to give a pledge, then—not his expulsion, but (3) his suspension till the next Conference, that whenever he may give the pledge the President appoint him to the first vacancy. To spare your feelings and whatever brethren may think—my own too—I do *not* propose that he be reproved from the Chair. I have no objection to prolong the conversation; let us *talk ourselves nearer together*."

Mr. Entwisle: "I shall support a District Meeting when they do right. I believe that all the brethren in the District disapproved of Mr. Stephens' conduct. I am inclined to be *snappy* when I am told that Mr. Wesley was opposed to the Established Church. He was always pleased to preach in one. The last Conference Mr. C. Wesley attended was at Bristol (1786). Mr. Smythe (a Methodist clergyman) came over from Dublin to propose a separation from the Church. He moved it, and Dr. Coke seconded it; but Charles Wesley stamped, and cried, 'No.' Mr. C. Wesley's 'No' became a proverb in the Connexion. I have received a letter from Mr. Edmondson, saying: 'I have united with Dissenters. I am not a High Churchman, but really, between ourselves, like Churchmen better than Dissenters.'"

This little incident of Methodist history was of no small interest and significance. Wesley writes:—

"July 25th, 1786, Bristol.

"Our Conference began on Tuesday; on Thursday we permitted any member of the society to be present, and weighed what was said about separating from the Church, but we all determined to continue therein without one dissenting voice. Great had been the expectation of many that we should have had warm debates, but by the mercy of God there was none at all."

By these combined statements we are taught:—

1. That the most prominent movers in the direction of Dissent were two most popular Methodist clergymen of the time (next to the brothers Wesley), the eloquent Irish revivalist Smythe, and the generous and ubiquitous Dr. Coke. 2. That so far was

Wesley from being afraid of the difference of sentiment and judgment in Conference itself being known to his people, that the session in which the discussion took place was made an "open Conference," the ticket of membership in the Methodist Society admitting male or female to the Conference. 3. That notwithstanding Mr. Charles Wesley's "No," the arguments on both sides were not only heard but also weighed. 4. That this very frankness and fulness of deliberation not only did not cause, but on the contrary kept off, all "warm debates."

Dr. Warren: "I think that in the present state of things we should be as neutral as possible, and maintain our middle position between Church and Dissent. What shall we gain by losing that? I answer: A suspicious friendship. But what should we lose? Our independence. We should lose also the affections of many of our people. We should lose the influence we have with so many on both sides, Churchmen and Dissenters. If we go into the house in which Mr. Bunting says Wesley died, we shall go into a very old one; if to the Dissenters, into a very worn one. We have a house of our own. I shall lift up my voice most solemnly against our taking one step towards the Church." Dr. W. here held up a paper asking, "Is this Mr. Bunting's?"

The President: "I object to putting in that paper."

Mr. Bunting: "Let him put it in." The President would not allow it.

Dr. Warren: "I wish the Conference to be unanimous, and therefore I have spoken." Dr. W. then made some reference to a subject which the President could not bear, complaining that he had been "taken by surprise." Dr. Warren, silenced for a second time, sat down.

Mr. Bromley: "I regret that this resolution is introduced by Mr. Bunting, from the fact of his having been goaded by the conduct of Mr. Stephens' brother." (Here Mr. Bromley was tremendously interrupted.) Mr. Bromley: "The case is new; nothing of the kind has occurred before. It is a case involving in its workings the peace of the Connexion. I think it should have been turned over to the Conference. (Interruption.) Why may I not speak as well as others? The second resolution contains what is not true in fact." Mr. Bromley began to read, but some cried out. He said: "He that answereth a matter before he heareth it, it is folly unto him."

Mr. Gaulter: "The man's intellects are in a state of emigration." Mr. Bromley resumes: "I will not consent to capital punishment being inflicted on any brother without law. I know that the Conference is supreme. What you determine is law. But I do not know that a court of equity can pronounce sentence of death. No Lord Chancellor pronounces a sentence which obliges him to put on the black cap. I object to taking a man out of the work whom God has placed there on prerogative and not on law. I do not advocate the conduct of the young man. I move, (1) that the suspension of Mr. Stephens be taken off. (2) That our business is to save souls. (3) That the ex-President, Mr. Stephens, and Mr. Bunting, advise with Mr. Joseph Stephens."

Mr. Marsden: "Is it nothing to have our societies rent which have been gathered by our fathers now in Heaven? This is the most important subject

which has come before us. The Methodists are a great body whose business is to save souls, *not to unsettle institutions*. We have societies in Scotland, France, Germany, and Sweden; do we go there, too, to unsettle the institutions of the country? The conduct of Mr. Wesley and our fathers was not so. There appears to me something of folly in such policy as Mr. Joseph Stephens would commit us to. The colliers and weavers of Ashton ought not to be addressed by a Methodist preacher in an inflammatory manner. We have promised to give our whole time to the work of a Methodist preacher, yet, after all these evils, I am inclined to go as far as possible in showing mercy. I hope he may be saved to the Connexion, and the Connexion saved from any further dangers and disturbances from him. Let us still keep the mid-channel, and not drive our vessel on 'the rocks on either hand'; and we shall find plenty of sea-room, and the heavenly gale will safely bring us to the desired haven."

Mr. Reece said: "If Mr. Bunting had done nothing but what he did yesterday and to-day, he has laid under the greatest obligation all who love old Methodism."

Mr. Moore: "Mr. Wesley used to tell us we should find it hard work to deal with a man who had a whim which he calls 'conscience,' and another a whim which he calls 'honor.' You will think that neither of them is solid, yet you must take care how you deal with him. Now with regard to this whim which our brother has, there is no solidity in it. In eight years he ought to have known what Methodism is. If he had he would not have given it all this trouble. (Signs of impatience.) I am sorry to hear clamour. It is unbecoming in judges. A Methodist preacher is a man of one business. Mr. Stephens ought to have told the Dissenters that, and every one who comes into our body knows this. But I do not find that the Conference has delegated to the District Meeting the power of suspension except in cases of immorality or deficient ability. I would have a severe sentence passed by the Conference, to reduce him to humility."

Mr. Lessey: "I regret that any brother should have been made the object of cutting remarks, but I acknowledge our great obligations to Mr. Bunting. . . . I would ask Mr. Moore in what way a District Meeting is to be regulated, if one of its members may refuse to obey its mandate. As to the Church, let us keep where we are, and not move to the right hand or the left. We do not require Mr. Stephens to give up his principles, but only to refrain from agitation. Many Superintendents have had their way made rough through Mr. Stephens' conduct. We must lay a strong hand upon agitators. If we do not put Mr. Stephens under restraint, he will refuse to be restrained. If I do not promise obedience to Conference suspend me. Let us betake ourselves to the spirituality of our fathers."

Mr. Moore: "Mr. Lessey has uttered a great many truisms and has used rhetoric not allowed to a judge, but to counsel. What has he proved? What no one doubts."

Mr. Gaulter: "I could not be a Methodist preacher on Mr. Bromley's principles. Our work is to *save souls*. When I find a young man lecturing to political and semi-ecclesiastical societies, I ask is this what we are maintained for by our people? I will tell you what Mr. Moore said to me the first time I ever saw him. A Superintendent had been acting wrong (as I thought), and I was always popularly inclined, Mr. Moore said,

I told Mr. Wesley: 'The man who resists his Superintendent, will resist you.' And I tell Mr. Moore: the man who resists a District Meeting will resist the Conference. I begin to think that eloquent young man, with all his attractions, is not called to be a Methodist preacher."

Mr. Atherton: "I think the District Meeting could not do otherwise than it did. As to the recorded opinions and sentiments of this Body, I have a collection of the productions of the old Preachers which show that there was a difference of opinion in this matter among Benson, Thompson, and the rest. Their language was stronger than ought now to be adopted. But they would not make public speeches on the subject. Mr. Stephens had no business to meddle with this agitation. I contend for strict neutrality. I can have peace in my circuit only on this condition. I believe the Church party is the strongest. I think the argument is on the side of Dissent, but the facts are on the side of the Church. I demur to the statements of the obligations that we owe to the Church. What has it done for Methodism? It gave us Wesley; but not as a boon. It cast him out as a pestilent fellow. We might as well say that we are indebted to the Church of Rome for Luther. How the parsons have persecuted the Methodists! Look at Lord Sidmouth's Bill. The Poet Laureate indeed when he went into the character of John Nelson and the early preachers, could say: 'Almost thou persuadest me to be a Methodist!' He could not curse us at all, but blessed us altogether. I respect the Established Church; but mostly in my study, when I see Tillotson, Hall, etc., on my shelves. But what need has she of our support—with her universities, her formularies so constructed as to include both Arminians and Calvinists, her property and power, her King, Lords and Commons. If God do not support her with such supports, she will not stand with any help of ours. But while I request neutrality on the one side, I must request it on the other."

This speech, like Mr. Bunting's, was followed by an outburst of applause, on which Mr. James Wood remarked: "This is the 54th Conference I have attended, but I never heard clapping before, and I beg that it may be discontinued."

The President informed the Conference that many names had been taken down to speak, but the Conference generally seemed to approve the suggestion that the debate might now be closed, but Dr. Beaumont and Mr. Galland must claim to be heard.

Mr. Bunting: "I think it ought not to be said that we refused to hear anyone on this question." So the conversation was continued, and Mr. Waterhouse said "Such serious consequences may be pending on our decision. The Birmingham people are looking to you to uphold Methodism. Are we to wage war on the finest feelings of the majority of the Methodists?"

Mr. Galland: "I feel myself in a peculiar position, but will state what has raised me to this hardihood: (1) I was the first Superintendent of Mr. Joseph Stephens; (2) I should like to concur entirely with the District Meeting in their resolutions. I find it necessary to state my own opinion. I think the union of Church and State is lawful, not that I attach any importance to my own opinion, but numbers of our people think it is unlawful. Many of our enemies have predicted that the Conference will uphold them as they are. There are two kinds of neutrality: (1) a total abstention from the subject, or (2) fair play by allowing advocacy on both sides. Mr. Bunting had

admitted that the Manchester resolutions *lean towards* the Church. Yet the Church does not recognise our orders. Mr. Watson said: 'Things will not be right until the Archbishop of Canterbury and the President of the Conference can exchange pulpits.' I am not satisfied that the Superintendent of the Ashton Circuit did his duty in the case."

Mr. Galland then mentioned the name of Mr. Grindrod. Mr. Bunting rose to order. Mr. Galland proceeded: "I mean nothing but honour to Mr. Grindrod, but I pass on. I am informed that the resolutions were drawn up before the case was fully heard. I wish the District Meeting had had regard to the handle which would be made of this. After a serious and dispassionate view of the case, I must say that the District Meeting did not take the most conciliatory plan." (Mr. Gaultier cried out: "We do not understand you.") Mr. Galland resumed: "It will be found that I am well understood, if a man who feels deeply makes himself well understood." Mr. Galland then gave a high testimony to Mr. Stephens' character, and finished thus: "Bright as have been the glories which have often encircled the head of Mr. Bunting, they have never been brighter than when he proposed that as soon as Mr. Stephens gave a pledge that he would devote himself wholly to his proper work as a Methodist preacher, he should be appointed to a circuit."

Mr. Bunting: "Now that the question of Church and State is opened out, it must be discussed. The Manchester District brethren had a right to speak. I now say most solemnly that if their mild resolutions for the security of our great principles do not pass, I will not mix with Methodism, unless the principle of maintaining our exact neutrality be this, not one inch nearer to, nor one inch further from the Church than we now are. Mr. Galland confounds friendliness with Dissenters and friendliness to dissent."

Mr. Ward: "I think the sentence of the District Meeting merciful. Mr. Stephens was not in a position to *stipulate* with them. Testimony has been brought forward to his zeal and diligence. He has been placed in unfavourable circumstances; alone at Stockholm and then placed under a Superintendent who had not nerve enough. With respect to our position towards the Church, God has given us a better system. It is not our place to move towards either the Church or Dissent. We have resisted attempts to join us to either. We have amongst us conscientious Churchmen, conscientious Dissenters, and some who are neither. I am one of these last. Let us hold to our distinguished title—*Methodists*."

Dr. Beaumont: "I should have been glad, if I could, to avoid the responsibility of speaking, but I was born in the house which God built for Wesley when he was houseless, and I hope to live and die in it, and I must take my share of responsibility in this matter. I think the Manchester District Meeting did right in requiring Mr. Stephens to give up his secretaryship. In taking it he was all but fatally wrong. In respect to the second resolution, I am afraid that it takes a step forward to the Church. The substance of the second and third resolution leads towards Canterbury. Mr. Wesley, like a strong and skillful rower, looked one way while every stroke of his oar took him in the opposite direction. He never resolved that he would go no further from the Church. We must have room to breathe and move our arms. I do not like to be tacked on to the Established Church. Let us retain our primitive liberty. It is a serious business for the Conference to put its *imprimatur*



on any restriction on that liberty. To require a pledge is very proper, but require it on both sides. The Scotch Methodists think the Church of England incurably wrong. It is very difficult to answer for the conduct of brethren who, whilst gagging others, allow themselves to speak and do what they please."

Mr. Dixon: "I will guard myself against being led away by passion. I feel myself a judge, and wish to be grave. I object to the conduct of Mr. Stephens. As a Preacher he had not a right to do as he pleased. I have no reason to favour the Church; I am a Methodist of the third generation. None of us has the legal or moral right to dissolve the union between Church and State. Mr. Wesley did not propel his boat from the Church, but abreast of her. I entertain a view of the abstract question, but we ask whether it would be better for King, Lords, and Commons if the Church should be destroyed? I rejoice in the position which Mr. Atherton takes to-day. I think it would be an infinite grievance to dissolve the Connexion by agitating this question. But all that is English is so bound up with the Establishment that to destroy it would set all loose. Some brethren think that the two resolutions put Methodism in no new light. They merely record a fact. In Mr. Wesley's works we frequently find it put—"Are we Dissenters?" I grant there are passages which seem to lean the other way, but I am not to be turned into a Dissenter. I will stop at the threshold of that principle. *Not an inch nearer to the Church. We Methodists stand in the noblest position between the two.* I am placed in opposition to my dear friend, Mr. Galland, who is most honourable and disinterested. I admire Mr. Stephens' talents. Whenever I see mind I admire it. As to my old friend and school-fellow's observation (Mr. Bromley) about thunder, etc., from without—both Church and Dissent perhaps—let us act honourably and conscientiously."

Mr. Scott: "I am very glad at our unanimity in condemning Mr. Stephens' conduct, but grieved that anyone should wish that the District Meeting had placed its authority under Mr. Stephens' feet. I think we owe it both to the Church and the Dissenters to state that it is our purpose to go no further from the Church. I have some doubt as to the mildness of the sentence."

Mr. McLean: "Mr. Wesley always advised his people to attend the Church of Scotland."

Mr. Anderson: "If I am ardent, remember I am not a judge. We went fully into the resolutions. We in the district refused to touch the abstract question which you have allowed. I besought Stephens to submit, with tears. He said: 'I cannot.' We suspended him for contumacy, and for nothing else. You may blame us, but these cock-boats must not run down the vessel."

Mr. Bunting: "I congratulate Dr. Warren on his victory over windmills. I think he would have been rebuked by the old patriarch if he had called the old house *creaky*. I should not throw a stone through the window, nor set fire to the building. Mr. Bromley talks of *suspension* as if he thought it meant *hanging*. I have no fixed opinion as to the abstract question. I am inclined to think that provision for Christian instruction is the right thing in a Christian country. *And the time may come when the argument for an Establishment will be taken away if the Methodists and Dissenters be quiet.* All I mean is—If I went from the Methodists I would go to the Church rather than Dissent. I would not go to fierce, formal Dissent. To go further would injure our

usefulness. We cannot be friendly to Dissent. One of its first principles is—Every man shall choose his own minister. Can you be friendly to that?"

This question seemed to be put to Mr. Galland, who replied: "I recognise an Independent Church as true a Church of Christ as the Established Church."

Mr. Bunting proceeded to vindicate his proposition, adding: "Dr. Clarke believed that Mr. Wesley was in error about Constantine. I think Mr. Galland has deviated from Mr. Wesley, but he does it in such a manly manner that I cannot respect him the less."

"Mr. Jackson, Editor, spoke on the subject for 'nearly an hour.' But as the speech was published by the request of Conference in pamphlet form, and the argument is given in his 'Recollections,' it need not detain us here. His main object was to break the force of Wesley's lament on the union of Church and State effected by Constantine, but I think every open-minded reader of his published speech will agree in Mr. Fowler's 'opinion,' he 'did not make out his case.' His really strong point was the advantage we derive from abstention from *aggressive, political* Dissent, as a *community*, and the disadvantages which must needs result from the abandonment of our position. He showed how 'serviceable' to our work its '*strictly spiritual*' character had been, and that already through this agitation, many of our sober people had become alienated for ever."

The resolutions were passed *seriatim*. The 1st, the confirmation of the District Meeting, *unanimously*. 2. Requiring Mr. Stephens to abstain from any such proceedings in the future, with three dissentients. 3. Suspending him for one year if he refuse to give a pledge to that effect, *unanimously*. 4. If he give the pledge during the year he be appointed to a circuit, four against.

Mr. Stephens replied humbly and submissively—requested a copy of the resolutions, and conversation with the mover (Mr. Bunting) and Mr. Galland, "as my answer depends upon *the sense put upon them*."

The President: "The resolutions shall be read till Mr. Stephens understands them."

They were read again.

Mr. Stephens: "I should like to be informed if the Conference understands the views of the District Meeting with respect to the civil constitution of the country."

The President: "I must remind Mr. Stephens that we are not here to dispute on that subject."

Mr. J. R. Stephens: "I would ask for two hours, and for two or more members of the Conference to converse with me."

Mr. Stephens, Sen.: "I would request my son to spend the interval in prayer, not in reasoning. I think his conscience is not at all involved."

Mr. Stephens, Jun.: "I have spent the night in the manner recommended by my father."

Mr. Bunting: "I think he should have a copy of the resolution relating to his suspension, no other."

Messrs. Galland, Atherton, Entwisle, Scott, Reece, and Crowther, were requested to converse with Mr. Stephens.

On his return he said: "I beg leave to withdraw from the Connexion, as I cannot give the pledge."

Mr. Galland: "There was a difference of opinion amongst the Committee as to what was to be understood by the pledge, and we were therefore not very likely to bring him to acknowledgment."

Mr. Galland made many efforts to speak to this point; but, in my judgment (Mr. Fowler's), was very unfairly put down.

Mr. Entwisle: "I wish to have Mr. Stephens' statement if he is satisfied with the conduct of his brethren."

Mr. Stephens: "*Most unqualifiedly so.*"

Mr. Bunting: "I would propose that Mr. Galland be heard at a convenient time."

Mr. Galland: "That is tantamount to not being heard at all. Surely there can be no time for hearing an argument on any subject after it is decided and done with, so fitting as whilst it is yet before the house."

Mr. Bunting: "I wish to save him, but he seems decided."

Mr. Stephens, Sen.: "My son is very obedient in all other matters, but I have no hope of bringing him to acknowledge his error in this. I think Mr. Galland should be heard."

Mr. Galland: "Mr. Reece stated that for Mr. Stephens to write an abstract argument, even, in favour of the union of Church and State, or address a letter to an M.P., on the subject, would be a violation of the pledge."

Mr. Reece: "I did state that the pledge wanted to prohibit him from writing, as that might agitate and complete the mischief which he had begun."

Mr. Bromley: "Some of us will declare ourselves Dissenters if that ground be taken."

Mr. Bunting: "The management of our ministry is with ourselves. I think we may dispose of the memorials at once. I move: 'The Conference expresses its satisfaction with those societies which have been quiet. It is sorry to find that chapels have been appropriated to improper uses, and disapproves of our people interfering in matters of our discipline.' When a revolution takes place we will consult Dr. Warren about a new house. Some say a strong arm must be laid on the Tory side. They tried to catch me in order to fry me, but they failed. I wish they had not caught one on the Liberal side. We must settle this matter."

The President: "I have received several communications, some temperately, others strongly worded—one from Ashton and one from Liskeard—wishing for protection of the peace of the societies." Mr. Bunting's resolution was carried.

Thus ended this critical discussion which, according to the oldest ministers—to one of whom it was the fifty-fourth

Conference he had attended—was the most excited Conference which had yet been held, insomuch that it initiated the era of cheering, clapping, and vociferous and uproarious manifestations of feeling, not expressible by "Amen," "Hallelujahs," or devout "*Glorias*" of any form. The importance of its substantial decision it would be hard to over-estimate, so far as it went. The only matter of sincere regret is that, as Mr. Bunting said so truly, political "*neutrality*" was not the word. That there were two sides in the house, as well as of the house, was plain enough. There always had been, even in Wesley's day. But the "stock still" position was not maintained, as it surely should have been—after this deliberate review and settlement of the Wesleyan Methodist situation—with equal stringency on both sides. A somewhat longer, looser tether was yielded to the one side than to the other. Nevertheless, by this decision, Methodism has been saved for three-and-sixty years from being drawn or driven into the muddy whirlpool of party politics.

How great a deliverance has thus been wrought may be partly estimated by the judgment recently expressed of one of the acutest observers of our time, who cannot be suspected of theological partiality. Mr. Lecky writes in his latest work (1896):—

"The decay of the doctrinal basis of English Nonconformity, though it is not likely to lead to any amalgamation of Churches, is having very mischievous consequences. It is giving Nonconformity a far more political character, which is sometimes singularly unworthy and unscrupulous. In some periods of past history, England owed much to the political action of Nonconformists, and they raised very appreciably the moral level of English politics. Those who have studied their conduct and their alliances in the present generation will scarcely attribute to them such an influence." —Vol. I. pp. 435, 436.

This discussion took up two full days. Mr. Stephens' subsequent proceedings form part of English history. He betook himself to political agitation, which seemed his most congenial element, and gave the Government more trouble than he ever gave the Conference, and compelled them, sore against their will, to take more stringent measures with him.

Mr. Bunting brought his own case before the Conference. A few weeks before the Conference assembled, a letter had appeared in the *Standard* signed "Jabez Bunting," and addressed to the Tory candidate for Finsbury, the borough in which City Road Chapel stood. It strongly advocated the claim of that

gentleman. This advocacy was enforced and emphasised by the appearance on the hustings of the commanding figure of the Senior Secretary of the Wesleyan Methodist Missionary Society. Now Finsbury was a sort of Liberal stronghold, which the Tories were concentrating all their energies to storm. In such a state of the public mind, and so close to the time and place of the assembling of the Conference, which it was known must deal decisively with the relation of its members to public intermeddling with political conflict, there is small wonder that this prominent appearance on the stage of party politics of the most conspicuous man in Methodism should cause no little stir.

Nevertheless no direct allusion to the matter had been made in Conference. But Mr. Beaumont's observation—"My difficulty is with the brethren who, while gagging others, say and do what they please"—and Mr. Reece's contention that the writing of a letter to a member of Parliament on the question would be a violation of Mr. Stephens' pledge, were, not unnaturally, taken by Mr. Bunting as referring to his own conduct with regard to party politics. So he claimed leave to bring the matter before the Conference.

Mr. Bunting: "I complain of being assailed by the brethren who have said such a great deal about liberty of speech. The true meaning of it all is to criminate me." Mr. B. then proceeded to notice his letter which had appeared in the *Standard*. It was addressed to the Tory candidate himself. "One of his committee called upon me to know if I would consent to its publication. I objected, stating my aversion to notoriety. I said I must first see my letter. I proposed to consult a Methodist layman, and personal friend of the Tory candidate. I accompanied him to see the letter (presumably at the Tory Committee Room). They said there was not a sentiment in the letter which I had not avowed elsewhere; the letter would do some good, if I could brave the storm which its publication would call forth. I said I had *rather* it was not printed, etc. And there it was left. I was surprised to find that it *got* into the newspaper. Then, as to the hustings? We have had great difficulty in obtaining an interview with Lord Althorpe. Mr. Spring Rice offered to converse with us without the formality of appointing a time."

The object of the deputation alluded to was the exemption of our chapels from assessment. The Government had already granted the exemption when Mr. Bunting's speech was made. A vote of thanks for the exemption passed this very Conference. The rest of the speech was a vindication of his having voted for Lord Sandon at Liverpool, which a previous Conference had fully justified.

Mr. Bunting closed his speech thus : "For some reason, I am an object of downright cruelty, of persecution, slander, and detraction. It may annoy me, I hope it will not destroy me."

Mr. B.'s speech was most loudly cheered and clapped during its delivery and at the close.

Dr. Warren : "I, for one, disclaim the having said or done anything derogatory to the character of Mr. Bunting. But, I think if one brother lets off a squib, and you extinguish *him* for doing so, you ought to extinguish a brother who lets off a rocket on the other side of the street."

Dr. Beaumont : "As I have said the strongest thing about gagging the one side and allowing full freedom of speech to the other, I have a right to ask whether I am one of the 'downright cruel persecutors, slanderers, and detractors' to whom Mr. Bunting has alluded?"

Mr. Bunting : "I will give notice in private to those persons whom I intend to bring before the Conference. *I will not be catechised.*"

Mr. Reece : "I hope the explanation is satisfactory to the brethren." (Cries of "No! No!")

Mr. Bunting : "I am ready to answer any *charge* that may be brought against me."

"Mr. Bromley then rose and said that since Mr. Bunting positively refused to answer a brotherly question, such as he so often put to others, there was no alternative but to '*charge him with having slandered the Conference*' by the utterly unsustained accusations which he had brought against its members."

Amidst great clamour and uproar, Mr Beaumont said : "I move that Mr. Bunting be required to give up the names of the brethren referred to as 'slanderers, detractors,' etc." Mr. Galland followed, and expressed his regret that Mr. Bunting had made no explanation in the *Standard* of the fact that his letter "got into" that newspaper without its writer's full consent. Mr. Galland also asked "whether Mr. Bunting would have braved an equal 'notoriety' on behalf of a 'candidate' who held the opposite views to those of the Tory candidate, however good a man he might have been?" To these questions no answer was returned.

Mr. Bromley : "I doubt the wisdom of publishing Mr. Jackson's speech separately at this excited season. It is a 'coming nearer to the Church.'" (This was repudiated.)

Mr. Stanley : "Our neutrality ought to be *absolute*."

Mr. Bunting : "'*Neutrality*' is not the word we used. We are to stand *stock still*; not move in any direction."

The Conference made a very grave experiment, which many, at the time, thought highly injudicious and venturesome, and which issued in disastrous loss to Methodism. This was the appointment of Mr. Valentine Ward to Jamaica, as General Superintendent of West Indian Missions. He could be ill-spared from England, being one of our finest preachers and speakers, and ill-spared from Conference, where his moderating, gentle,

and persuasive wisdom was most sadly missed. Besides, his appointment to an anxious, arduous position in the tropics at a crisis, the training-time of the emancipated blacks for freedom and for progress, was an almost certain sentence of death to a man of his enormous corpulence, in the thirty-fourth year of his laborious ministry. Alas! he was struck down in the first year of his General Superintendency.

Another questionable and much questioned act of this Conference was the appointment of a second minister to the Yeadon Circuit against the wishes and expostulations of the people. The Lord had visited that "little hill of Zion" with a marvellous outpouring of His Spirit, the result being a large ingathering to the Church. It seems to have been suggested in the Stationing Committee, by someone who knew little, if anything, about the place and people, that such a large accession of members would require an additional minister to look after them. The matter was, of course, referred by the representative to the minister and circuit stewards, who replied by a well-reasoned remonstrance. Their petition humbly sheweth that the Yeadon Circuit is one of the smallest in the whole Connexion; that not one of its three chapels was more than two miles from the preacher's house; that not three or four other preachers in the Connexion had such an easy berth, or had so much time for pastoral visitation; that they were a church of working men and women, and that a large proportion of the new converts were young people earning very little. These representations were earnestly enforced by the Chairman of the District, the judicious and kind-hearted ex-President, George Morley, who, as Governor at Woodhouse Grove, resided but two miles from Yeadon, and often preached there, and was closely cognisant of all the details of the case. Moreover, he had some years' longer experience than had Mr. Bunting, whose Superintendent he had been. He declared that the forcing an additional preacher on an unwilling circuit was a thing "unprecedented" in Methodism.

Nevertheless Mr. Bunting moved: "That two preachers be appointed to the circuit, and if they cannot, or will not, support him, we will." He added: "A noisy meeting and a love-feast constitute a great portion of their ordinances. I wish there was less parade about revivals. I wish that our Editor would not insert any report from superintendents. There should be less said about revivals. You will spend money to *win* souls, but not to *keep* them."

Yet anyone who reads Dr. George Smith's account of what he calls "The glorious revival at Yeadon" (Vol. III., 295-297) copied from the Magazine, must feel how uncalled for were these strictures on the humble-minded Superintendent for reporting this spiritual "phenomenon," as Wesley calls a similar revival in his own time. The account was marked by the utter absence of any semblance of parade. There is not the slightest glorification of any instrumentality whatsoever; in fact, there was none to glorify. As the awe-struck narrator tells us: "God's arm was made bare in such a way as to constrain us to say, 'It is the Lord's doing, and it is marvellous in our eyes.'" What was more suited for a Methodist magazine than the record of an event at once so supernatural and blessed, such as Wesley ever loved to chronicle? It is true enough that the Yeadoners made noise enough when their religious sensibilities were strongly moved; but to suggest that "noise" was either the charm or the characteristic of their meetings and love-feasts is as superficial and as unscientific as to imply that "noise" is the chief attraction of a railway train.

The result of this unprecedented act of Conferential authority might have been very serious, but for the characteristic efforts of George Morley to prevent the fulfilment of his own forewarnings. He persuaded the Woodhouse Grove Quarterly Meeting to share the cost and services of the unasked-for neophyte who was sent to Yeadon.

Perhaps the most historic conversation which took place this Conference was that upon the "formation of the Theological Institution." But as the history of this discussion has been fully and fairly told elsewhere, especially in Dr. George Smith's "History of Methodism," I shall in this case also confine myself to focussing the added light, to be obtained from Mr. Fowler's Journal. This light is very strong. Stout old William Leach, one of the best theological preachers in the Connexion, not unfitly opened the discussion by proposing that the Conference agrees to the recommendation of the Committee for the establishment of an Institution. He confessed that up to the time of his reaching London he had been afraid that the movement would alter the character of Methodism, but since his arrival his mind had been relieved. "I am glad to find that a Governor will be appointed to watch over the piety of the young men. I think that many errors, to be deplored, may thus be prevented."

Mr. B. Slater seconded the resolution. "The clergy are now more zealous. We must bestir ourselves. The young Preachers who have been educated at



our schools for Preachers' sons are the most acceptable generally. But few have an adequate knowledge of theology. Some say, it will destroy the variety of our ministry and produce an artificiality of attitudes and tones. There is danger in cramming young men."

Dr. Warren rose "to propose an amendment," but Mr. R. Wood "rose to order." He maintained that Dr. Warren had "no right to move an amendment." This, of course, was overruled, and Dr. Warren proceeded, but Mr. Bunting interrupted: "Anything so astounding as Dr. Warren's conduct I have never met. Either his head or heart must be sadly wrong. When we met in October he concurred in everything. I was absent on Conference business for about an hour, when the question came on: Who shall take part in the administration of the Institution? Then Dr. Warren's objection began. Something had been said about my taking some part. I said that I was married to the Missions. Some time after it appeared that Dr. Warren was not with us. He used language not quite in keeping with the suavity of his manners. We thought it mighty strange." Mr. Bunting then animadverted with great severity on Dr. Warren's conduct in the affair, observing that "he manifested intellectual displacency, and acted unfairly toward his fellow-committee-men."

It is here necessary to interpose a historical note. The instructions of the Conference of 1833 to the Committee in question, were most simple and explicit. They are directed "to arrange a plan for the better education of our junior Preachers." (Minutes, p. 104.) But, having accomplished this work in right workmanly style, they felt inclined to serve the Connexion a little more than they were asked to do, and proceeded further to nominate the men to fill the various offices. Their first nomination was Mr. Bunting as "General Superintendent of the Institution." Dr. Warren's speech to Conference, by sheer force of interruption and the irruption of Mr. Bunting's "great severity" of parenthetical animadversion, was split up into fragments. He resumed:

"I did think it was improper—not our place—to nominate officers, and when only members of the Committee were approved by the Committee, I thought it not fair." At this remark the Conference clamoured, and Mr. Bunting said: "Let Dr. Warren speak, and bring all his charges against the Committee. If we do not clear ourselves, then hang us."

Dr. Warren then resumed, but was interrupted by Mr. Lessey: "I wish to ascertain the ground of Dr. Warren's opposition to the Institution, that it may go for what it is worth. His opposition commenced when others were nominated to be governors and teachers." Some very uninteresting disputes and criminations followed, and Conference signified great impatience.

Mr. Bunting: "I submit whether it is of so much importance what Dr. Warren thinks about the matter."

Dr. Warren resumed: "Were I capable of making any set speech I should think it unseemly in opposing the views of the Committee. But I

feel deeply, and I think it due to the cause to show why I differ from my brethren. I have no wish to take the opportunity, too often afforded me, to reply to any unbrotherly remarks." A great clamouring interrupted Dr. Warren, and he was called to order by the Chair. The President: "I cannot allow of extraneous matter." Dr. Warren then proceeded: "One principal reason why I opposed the nominations in the Committee was because I thought that I discovered the operation of principles perilous to the liberty of the brethren. In every succeeding meeting I was confirmed in my views, and my suspicions have been strengthened by having my opposition denounced as 'unprincipled.' I appeal to the brethren who know me whether my conduct has merited such manifestations of bad temper?" (Here Dr. Warren was again interrupted, and compelled to break off from personal defence against the imputations cast upon him.) He tried again: "Well, then, this is the most important subject that ever came before this Body. I give place to no one for promoting creditable learning amongst the Preachers. I approach the question with the deepest anxiety. As to the abstract question of the education of our ministry, I am in entire agreement with the Committee, and also on many points of detail; but it is my solemn opinion that the time has not fully come for the adoption of such a system. (1) The projected scheme, however plausible in theory, will be found anti-Methodistical in fact. Methodism has succeeded well at home and abroad. Its efficiency is extraordinary. Remember our fathers—Nelson, and the rest. God gave us John Fletcher, the richest gem ever set in the diadem of Methodism. Then God gave us men like Benson and Bradburn and their peers. (2) It is said that the improved education of our people demands an improved education of the Preachers; but is it not from these same improved people that we shall draw our preachers? The improvement of the education of the Preachers will thus naturally keep pace with the improved education of the people, from amongst whom alone they come. Are our Superintendents restricted in their nominations for the ministry to stationary young men while all around them are progressing? Our vessel has passed the shallows of a grossly uneducated class of men, and is getting into deeper water. I appeal to the quality of the young men who have been taken out for the last fifteen years. And what a noble band of missionaries who have returned with developed intellect! I would not shrink from comparing any of these young men with men of the same age in the ministry of any Church. (3) I appeal to the present success of our system. (4) This movement has not originated with our people, but with some principal Preachers. The Quarterly Meeting of this very City Road itself has memorialised this Conference against it." The President: "I cannot allow allusions to be made to Quarterly Meetings." Dr. Warren resumed: "May I speak, then, of facts that have come under my own observation? The meeting which was called here of united ministers and laymen was expressly and most carefully composed of friends of the movement only. And this convention of 'friends' *only* goes, not to inform the Conference of the real judgment of the Connexion, so much as to influence the *vote* of Conference and over-awe its judgment. (Here some exclaimed, "No," and others "Yes.") It was stated in that meeting that 'it would be a serious matter for the Conference to decide otherwise than it had done, although the numerical strength of the meeting was so small.' He then proceeded to show how those who were invited to this London

meeting had been locally selected, and described a close meeting of Preachers favourable to the movement (apparently a dinner party), who had chosen the persons to be invited. He then proceeded: "But the weightiest reason against this resolution is the danger of throwing too much power into the hands of certain Preachers. I think this attempt to forestall the choice of the Conference by naming certain men for the offices to be created is a suspicious circumstance." He then read a printed rule "That the nomination of Officers to Connexional Departments is the exclusive prerogative of Conference itself, or a Committee to whom Conference has expressly entrusted that selection." He showed that no Committee constituted for another purpose, with definite instructions, had any right to go beyond their instructions, and take upon themselves the task of anticipating the choice of Conference itself. But the Committee had assumed to mention the officers, and that 'only from among themselves.' One individual they have designated to new offices—that of General Superintendent of the Institution and that of Theological Tutor—whilst he is still to retain the Senior Secretaryship at the Mission House." (Here Dr. Warren was again somewhat uproariously interrupted.) Mr. Entwistle said: "I think Dr. Warren should be allowed to say all he has to say." Dr. Warren then put a question to the President: "Whether the Committee for drawing up a plan of the Institution was the proper place to nominate the officers?" The President declined to answer. Another attempt was made to silence Dr. Warren, but Mr. Stanley said: "I beg that Dr. Warren may be allowed to finish his argument." Dr. Warren then resumed: "I ask whether the duties of these three offices can be filled by any mortal man?"

Mr. Bunting here again interrupted, complaining of "the unenviable situation in which he was placed by such a question, since he was the man alluded to." Dr. Warren: "I will conclude, then, by saying, that I think every brother should consider these points, if he vote upon this question."

Mr. Bunting: "I will relieve Dr. Warren, and perhaps we may have his vote after all. I now say, that nothing but the most imperative, peremptory, and absolute command of the Conference shall induce me to have anything to do with the Institution."

Mr. Bromley seconded Dr. Warren's amendment: "The previous question," which, of course, meant—the indefinite postponement of the whole subject. Mr. Bromley's objections were—1. The prolongation of the enforced celibacy of probationers, which the scheme involved. 2. The proverbial dangers to young men of college life, etc. 3. The uncertainty of beneficial results. 4. The having our ministers all cast in one mould."

Next rose Mr. James Wood, the most venerable man in the whole assembly, to address the fifty-fourth Conference in which he had taken part. He had twice been President and had reached the sixty-second year of his ministry. He had been chosen to fill the chair in that same chapel in the first year of the century, and his name was in the "Deed of Declaration" by Wesley's own hand as a member of the Hundred. He had thus been a member of the Legal Conference from the first day of its

existence. He was the first Governor of Woodhouse Grove School appointed by the Conference, and as the first General Treasurer of the Missionary Society, had addressed the first meeting ever held in London. He had written a good deal, especially a "Dictionary of the Bible," very useful to young men. He now advocated the adoption of means for the improvement of young preachers, but feared the evils incident to college life, as manifested in the universities and Dissenting seminaries. He thought the money would be better spent in furnishing the young preachers with books. Mr. Wood spoke but briefly, being very aged, but his points were much expanded in a remarkable letter to Dr. Warren, in which he fully explained the grounds of his own objection, yet entreated him to acquiesce in the decision of the Conference, not to disturb the Connexion on the matter, but give the new venture a fair and unobstructed trial. I have a copy of this letter, kindly given to me by his accomplished granddaughter, Mrs. Everett Green. His main misgiving proved the old man's sagacity and foresight. "His heart trembled for the ark of God ;" for he feared the time might come when technical scholarship, linguistic proficiency, and such smattering of science as might be picked up in a three years' college course, and a fair show of acquaintance with speculative divinity, would be thought more of than the sound and saving doctrines which for near a hundred years had done the work of Methodism. He ended his speech by saying : "I would deprecate this as the greatest evil ever admitted into Methodism."

Mr. Burdsall : "I do not plead for an illiterate ministry. (Mr. Bunting interrupted, but Mr. Burdsall took no notice of the interruption.) My feelings seem mixed. I do, however, object to this resolution on many grounds. If the question were, Are we to have able ministers of the New Testament, I should submit. I contend—1. We have had hitherto, a faithful and efficient ministry. Has the Methodist ministry in this respect sunk below the ministry of other Churches? Dissenting ministers may make more display, but they are not more solid, nor have they more godly unction. So far as our ministry has failed, it has failed on two grounds. 1. Our not sufficiently improving the talent we possess, but now it is a grave question : Will you come into collision with a great number of our people—perhaps not the wealthiest nor the wisest? I doubt the propriety of pressing this upon our people, many of whom, I know, will not very readily subscribe. Avoid the risk of parting with the simplicity of our ministry, which is its glory." He then suggested a plan for supplying our probationers with the best books, and testing their proficiency in the study of them, "and let them know that if they will not make an adequate improvement of their opportunities they cannot be admitted into full Connexion, and let it be incumbent on

Superintendents to see that the young men are spending a due amount of time in study. By this direction they may prevent much time from running to waste, and the contracting of many discreditable habits be precluded. Put them into the best way of study."

Mr. Gaultier: "It is a novel saying that this is a novel project. I have heard it talked about ever since I came into this Body. Mr. Wesley always had this in view. The books at Kingswood were not chosen for children, the school was established with a view to the Preachers. I have heard it talked about in the Connexion for forty-nine years. I have known several Preachers whom Wesley introduced into Kingswood School, who remained there till they were wanted for the work." Mr. Ward: "No body of Preachers are more excellent than ours, but some of us have offensive eccentricities. It should be one object of the tutors to correct these eccentricities. There are indeed dangers, the chief being that of a manufactured Ministry. But to his mind the practical question was—to utilise the time of the men on the *List of Reserve* whilst waiting to be called out." Mr. Sutcliffe made a telling point in reply to a speaker who had instanced Elijah as 'a successful though uneducated preacher. "Elijah was the great reviver, not only of religion but of the 'schools of the Prophets' in the kingdom of the ten tribes."

Mr. Scott: "At present we have more sermons to preach than our fathers had, and less time to read. I am thankful that our people have not called for this. But were laymen introduced here, they would soon tell us they want an improved ministry." Mr. Reece: "I feel the force of the objections stated. I was going to say that nothing had been said that is not intensely true."

But, he showed, the time had come when something must be done for the mental improvement of our ministry, and that every other plan suggested had been tried and failed.

Mr. Anderson: "I am satisfied of the Methodistical character of the Institution. I hate dandyism." But he had no fear that the Institution would promote that. Mr. R. Waddy spoke rather doubtfully on the question as a risky change. The President stated that a large number of the brethren had sent up their names as wishing to speak on the subject. Mr. Lessey offered to give up his turn if the other brethren would do the same. Mr. Bowers consented to this, and no one demurred but Mr. Haswell, who was already on his feet, so was allowed to speak his mind. He said: "The efficiency of a ministry is determined by its effects, and if so no case has been made out for the need of an Institution. But my chief objection is, that if this resolution is carried, it will throw an additional power into the hands of individuals, of whose power in connection with the Mission House there is even now some jealousy."

This last remark seems to have brought matters to a point. The Conference saw that several approved of the plan who did not approve of the nominations, and that the two were quite distinct matters, although the Committee had attached the latter to the former that they might secure the latter. Dr. Warren, by

not insisting on the separation of the two, put himself into a very false and undignified position. The plan had received his full assent, it was the nominations that provoked his opposition. That the Committee in assuming to make those nominations from among their own body had gone beyond their power, province, and instructions, was clear and undeniable, and so was the absurdity of designating for two of the offices an individual who already held a most arduous Connexional position which he was stipulated to retain. If Dr. Warren had known how to state his case in point-blank English, divested of the suave and silken rhetoric to which he was addicted, his argument would have been resistless.

Put in few words, it amounted just to this : Granted that one man among us is the very man we should have chosen for any one of these three offices, it scarcely follows that we are reduced to appointing him to all three at once. He holds now an office which gives ample scope for, and may well engross, his admittedly unequalled powers. It was stated that a satisfactory arrangement could be made to supply his place at the Mission House whenever his other offices might summon him elsewhere. But how ? A third Missionary Secretary had been appointed on the express and solemn assurance that a third secretary was absolutely necessary to meet the demands of the public service, and to protect the health and life of the public servants. Then how could the duties of two most anxious and arduous offices be laid upon the oldest secretary, or how could the other two secretaries bear up under two-thirds of his work ? If external aid must be called in, where would they find the man to do the work of Jabez Bunting ? The practical point, then, comes to this : Is not the next best for any one of these three offices at least one third as good as the man on whom you are asked to heap them all ?

There was another consideration also, which evidently weighed heavily with many of the members of the Conference. The very individual on whom it was proposed to lay the burden of three weighty offices had for years been holding a higher office than these three ; an office all the more predominant because it was nameless, irresponsible, and undefined — the effective premiership of the Methodist administration. This was significantly, though naïvely illustrated by the mode in which Mr. Bunting had explained his being called out of the Committee just as these nominations were proposed. He said : "I was called out on Conference business." Yet, in the room from which he was

called out, there sat at that moment the President of the Conference, the Secretary of the Conference, and the Chairman of the London District. "You are wanted, and nobody else will do," was plainly the meaning of the summons. The fact was, as everybody knew, whoever might be President, Mr. Bunting was the Prime Minister who never went out of office. This was the fact not obscurely hinted at by Dr. Warren, Mr. Haswell, and some other speakers.

Hence the Conference quietly ignored the eager and unasked-for nominations of the Committee, appointed for another purpose; and appointed a Committee for this very purpose and no other, which was to bring in its report the next day. Meanwhile the Conference went on with ordinary business; the proposed plan having passed the Conference with thirty-one dissentients.

Mr. Bunting: "I feel great respect for the brethren who have spoken against the motion, but am very sorry on account of Brother J. Wood differing from the Committee." On the second reading of the stations several very striking deliverances were made.

Mr. Bunting: "I am opposed to deciding matters by vote. That is determining by numbers, not the most respectable way certainly. I would ask Mr. Sleight, has he countermanded the Sabbath-breaking of the field-days (camp meetings) announced to be held in his circuit? The whole spirit of the affair is wrong, distracting other people's worship, making it a day of tumult which ought to be a day of rest. The animus of these things is such that we should meet it with resistance. It is a perfect farce to present petitions for the better observance of the Sabbath, while we allow these tumultuous meetings. It will lead to a division."

Mr. Bromley said: "Any hasty, arbitrary step might hasten the catastrophe."

The Superintendent of the circuit was deposed from the Superintendency. The Superintendent of a circuit objected to the appointment of a brother as his colleague who had been invited to the circuit in the regular way."

Mr. Bunting said: "In an appointment to a circuit the will of the Superintendent ought to be consulted before that of the circuit. The Superintendent is a party more important than the Circuit Steward. That is my doctrine."

At the close of a sharp discussion the entry is as follows:—

"Many were against it, but Mr. Bunting advocated the measure, and, like almost every other which is favoured with his advocacy, it prevailed."

The Report of the Committee for nominating officers for the Institution was as follows:—

1. "That Mr. Entwisle be the House Superintendent.
2. "That Mr. Hannah be Theological Tutor.

3. "That a young man be selected by the Committee for the Mathematical and Classical Department.

4. "That Mr. Bunting be *the Visitor*, his duty being to visit the institution twice a week, and particularly to watch over the Theological Department, and to give occasional lectures on 'Theology.'"

It soon became apparent that the ambiguous position in which the "*House Superintendent*" and the "*Theological Tutor*" were placed in relation to the "*Visitor*" was not exactly to the mind of either. For as to the Theological Department, the visitor was not simply to *inspect*, but particularly to watch over it. Mr. Entwisle had been twelve years longer in the ministry than Mr. Bunting. This was the forty-eighth annual Conference he had attended, four of them under the Presidency of Wesley himself. He had twice been President, he had been intimate with all the Elders that outlived Wesley, and had been one of the moulders of the Methodist policy on Wesley's death. He had so trained his three fine sons that they had become effective ministers. He could not but know Methodism, at least as well as the younger man who was now set over him, and the visits of this visitor were not to be "like angels' visits, few and far between," but "twice a week"; the preoccupied Missionary Secretary was to walk or drive from Hatton Garden into Hoxton Square to see whether or not the veteran Field Marshal was framing well in his drilling of these young recruits.

No wonder, then, that Joseph Entwisle should wish "to have a little more time to converse with Mr. Bunting before he gave his answer."

Mr. Hannah said: "I have some reasons for objecting to the appointment, but if I find myself unequal to the office at the end of the year I may resign."

Mr. Bunting: "I have the strongest possible repugnance to this office; I cannot accept it unless *forced into it by the threat of expulsion*. My difficulty, my objection, is to having a situation which may exact expectations which I have no means to meet. There are men in the Body who would rush into it, be glad to catch at it; but I cannot fulfil my duties at the Institution in connection with my duties as Missionary Secretary, and I am not willing to give this up for anything but a circuit."

Mr. Cubitt moved to take the sense of the Conference as to Mr. Bunting's being connected with the Institution without determining either the title or the functions of his office, but this fell through.

Mr. Reece: "I hope Mr. Bunting will accept office in the Institution. It must be in good repute, as well as suitably supplied. I do most cordially



recommend that Mr. Bunting's objection be overruled, not by any motion, but by affectionate request."

Dr. Beaumont: "I wish to know on whom the responsibility for the theological teaching is to rest, with Mr. Bunting or with Mr. Hannah? And who is to be the real head of the Institution, Mr. Entwisle or Mr. Bunting? One or the other must be ornamental—a figure-head. Mr. Entwisle is just appointed Head, and then another Head is appointed; we must not make the Institution a two-headed or a many-headed monster."

The President: "Is Mr. Entwisle's request for a private conversation with Mr. Bunting before the appointment is fixed acceded to?"

Mr. Bunting: "I can converse with Mr. Entwisle about our mutual relations, but if I have responsibility I must have power. I have no objection to the word 'Visitor'; very likely the Archbishop of Canterbury will be thrown in my face. Why do I undertake it all? Why, because I believe that many of our friends will like the Institution better if I am connected with it. You compel me to speak as a fool. Let the word 'Visitor' be used in a sense analogous to that in which it is used in other places, as in connection with other bodies; in this sense I agree to it as an appointment by the authority of the Conference. I think an erroneous opinion as to the Institution is abroad. Not half, I believe not one-third, will be taught the Classics, but in Theology and Methodism not one must be deficient; all must learn that. Let it not, even in joke, be called College, nor Mr. Entwisle the Principal, nor Mr. Hannah a Professor. The Institution will not work wonders. I venture to predict there will be many failures, wise as men are; they are wonderfully fond of being independent."

Mr. Burdsall: "I am surprised at this appointment. I would not have two theological tutors, it would be a reflection on Mr. Hannah."

Mr. Scott: "If Mr. Bunting were younger, I should be glad to see him both Missionary Secretary and Theological Tutor. Mr. Hannah will serve the Connexion in that office most usefully."

Mr. Galland: "I think that by this arrangement we are placed in a position of ineffable absurdity. I am sorry to find that the Institution will be established under the views of Methodism which have been announced at this Conference. I am sorry to be obliged to withhold *all* support from it of every kind until I am more satisfied with its probable utility."

Mr. Galland had been one of the most ardent promoters and most liberal subscribers to the scheme to which he objected with such energy; but the principles enunciated from the platform by the great man who was to be real head of the Institution, were doubtless his avowal of such decided Churchward leanings, and his strongly expressed displacency with revivals, if they were noisily carried out by means of Sunday camp meetings.

Mr. Galland had been brought up a Churchman in Hull, at that time the metropolis of Evangelicalism; he had been brought to God in a genuine Yorkshire revival, under a genuine Yorkshire revivalist; and though his gifts were quite of another

order, yet he had seen too much of the wonders God had wrought by Yorkshire revivalists to be scared by a noisy meeting or love feast, though he did not favour camp meetings on the Sabbath day. He had been brought up an ardent Whig and did not wish young ministers taught that the Superintendent's will should counteract the circuit's wish in the appointment of its ministers, or that the decisions of the Conference should be determined otherwise than by the vote of the majority. As Mr. Bunting had implicitly waived his objection, he was put down in the next issue of the *Stations* under the name he preferred,—of Visitor. But the brethren did not like the look of it as seen in print. Mr. Bunting had said that the term must be taken in a sense analogous to its ordinary meaning. But what was its ordinary meaning no one could make out; the word is so elastic that its meaning differs in almost every institution in which it is employed, so that the document which confers the title must define the duties that belong to it. Besides, some ugly and ill-omened historical associations had gathered round the word in the days of Henry VIII., so the name was changed to *President*. This had the advantage of being well descriptive of the position Mr. Bunting was quite sure to hold if he had any official connection with the Institution whatsoever.

It was, of course, a grave anomaly that the individual who was made *President* alike over Governor and all the rest was left to determine his own relations with the other authorities of the establishment. The result of this was inevitable; the stronger will and the more autocratic nature was sure to dominate. The others must give way with the best grace they could; and that one eminent minister should be Theological Tutor and another, set over him whose *chief* function was to particularly watch over the theological department, can only be excused, or even explained, by the just and necessary sensitiveness of Conference as to the integrity, and the perpetuation of the Wesleyan Methodist theology, as that which had received God's own most signal sanction; and the secured efficiency of an important institution will condone some grave anomalies. *All's well that ends well*, a very identical axiom with *All's well that's worked well*, and this again depends upon the workmanliness of the men who have to work it, in other words, upon the *personnel* of the administration. In this case the result did the highest credit to both the material and its manipulators.

I had not the advantage of a training at the Institution, but

I knew nearly all the men who were thus brought beneath the personal influence of Mr. Bunting, and, from all that I could gather, that influence was only good and vastly good. As a painter should first of all know how to paint; so a governor, especially of young men, is quite unequal to his place, unless he knows well how to govern. You must have a strong man for such a post. The Conference and the Connexion had sense enough to see that if the Theological Institution was to be hopefully and bravely launched, the strongest man available must be the master of the craft. And I do not think that there were three men in the Methodist Conference who did not recognise in Jabez Bunting that self-same strongest man. Besides, with very rare exceptions, his manner with *young* ministers was wonderfully happy and attractive. If he saw that a youth had in him the grit and metal of a genuine Methodist Preacher, he was warmly appreciative, exceptionally considerate, unusually indulgent, and most winningly respectful. These were fine and noble qualities in a man so potent and commanding. I have elsewhere given instances of these.

Thus Mr. Reece, I am persuaded, was but the mouthpiece of the vast majority, when he told the Conference that the very name of Jabez Bunting would give a character and a prestige to the new establishment which would much conduce to its success. And, assuredly, the Lincolnshire revivalism of such men as John Hunt and David Hay, was not smothered between featherbeds at Hoxton; or the Cornish revivalism of John McKenny at Richmond. There was no express dissentient from Mr. Bunting's appointment to the Presidency of the Institution, but Mr. Atherton, who objected strongly to plurality of offices, and insisted, but in vain, for a definition of the duties of the office.

It is noteworthy that the very next resolution proposed in Conference, was one by the venerable James Wood: "That a Committee be appointed to prepare a plan for improving our Local Preachers."

A preacher who was reported not to have competent abilities for our work, was affectionately requested to return home.

Mr. Reece informed the Conference that he found himself yet more incompetent to superintend Mr. Dunn than Mr. Griffith; that he could manage the Sheffield Circuit and the Sheffield District, but Mr. Dunn was quite beyond his powers. Someone else must solve the problem, how to superintend a colleague,

who *would not* be superintended. He must disclaim all further responsibility with regard to Mr. Dunn as a circuit minister. There was but one alternative ; either put another Superintendent or another second minister into Sheffield West. The Conference thought the latter horn of the dilemma was upon the whole to be preferred.

The importance of a Theological Institution was vividly illustrated by the case of a young Methodist minister, of a type which, alas ! is not yet extinct. This was an admittedly eloquent and clever youth, who, whilst retaining his status and his stipend as a Wesleyan Methodist minister, had published an attack upon a Wesleyan Methodist doctrine. After a year's time for consideration, when required to state his position towards our doctrine, he had replied in "a very offensive letter," which, however, was followed by a "milder one." His Superintendent said : "He is very popular and does not agitate either in the pulpit or in our people's houses, but I have not been able to hear of a single convert under his preaching, and in my opinion he will soon be a thorough-paced Socinian."

Dr. Beaumont : "That we *must keep to our doctrine, we are all agreed* ; the point now is : Can we keep faithful to our doctrinal trust, and yet keep this very able man ?"

It was resolved to appoint a special committee to meet in Leeds and investigate his case. Mr. Bromley alone advocated the leaving "our doctrines" to take care of themselves, in a speech which bears the stamp of his unrivalled coolness and perversity of leaning.

Mr. Bunting answered him : "The calmness of Mr. Bromley's speech does not render it less mischievous ; and calmness is not such an important element in a speech as *truth*."

The Committee met at Leeds and ascertained the state of the case from the young man's own lips. They found him wedded to his notions, and that we must either let go our doctrinal standards, or let go this brilliant pulpit orator. The Conference thought the latter was the lighter loss.

The difficulty with Mr. Dunn was very cleverly got over. Since no one could be found who felt equal to superintending Samuel Dunn, they threw the *onus episcopandi* upon his own stiff, sturdy shoulders. He was appointed Superintendent of the

Tadcaster Circuit, "his young man" being William Moulton, grandfather of the lamented Dr. Moulton.

Mr. Scott, treasurer of the Schools' Fund, proposed that an equal number of laymen to the ministerial members of the Committee should be invited to attend the meeting of the General Committee.

Mr. Bunting: "I second that. So far, I am a Liberal."

Seventeen Methodist gentlemen were selected and invited to join the twenty-two ministers at the Conference Committee in Sheffield.

No wonder that Mr. Fowler writes at the end of his report of the proceedings and discussions, "So ended this exciting and exhausting Conference." After sixty-two years of the working of the Theological Institution, it is most interesting and important to take note of the principal object of the institution, and, secondly, of the main misgivings with regard to it which were expressed by some of the most earnest and experienced members of the Conference and preliminary gathering, as shown by the speeches in both the one and the other. These are points which in the book of Methodist memory, should, to use a phrase of Dante, be indicated by paragraph marks. The main object was decisively indicated by the name chosen for the new establishment: the *Theological* Institution. This was set forth still further, with the utmost plainness, in the Resolutions, published in the Minutes of the Conference for 1834, wherein the design of the Institution was spread out before our people as a pledge and guarantee of the purposes to which their contributions would be sacredly devoted. This binding document has never been recalled. In this, after English grammar, composition, elocution—and the other elements of a sound, average English education—Biblical and Methodist Theology and Church principles and discipline, and sound Biblical interpretation held the central place of honour. Latin, Greek, and Hebrew were not essential, but might be insisted on or left untouched, at the discretion of the authorities, and according to the capacity and aptitude of the individual student. The bare idea of a student being excused from attendance on the lectures of the Theological Tutor in order to avail himself of a course of physical science at a secular college would have been simply shocking to every minister and layman in the Body. The very wish for such a thing would have been conclusive evidence of the man's unfitness for, and false conceptions of, the ministry to which he was aspiring; and regarded as a shameful perversion of funds

solicited and contributed mainly for the very purpose of theological instruction, and as a severe reflection on a distinguished minister withdrawn from circuit work, for the very purpose of imparting to our future ministers efficient teaching in theology. Next in importance was elocution, especially in the giving out of hymns with intelligence and sensibility, and with awakening effect, the reading of the Holy Scriptures with impressiveness and expository emphasis and intonation, and a natural, manly, and effective utterance and action in delivering a discourse. No minister of the time, in many of these gifts, surpassed the President of the Institution. Occasional readings and addresses, and devotional exercises, led by this master of a simple and commanding eloquence, must have been to a susceptible neophyte of immense and life-long service. So subordinate was what is conventionally meant by scholarship, to sound Wesleyan theology, that the Conference did not appoint the classical tutor, but left it to the Committee to choose "some young man," whilst the fittest man of eminence in the entire Body was most carefully selected for the theologic chair, and, in addition to this, its most trusted leader was charged to "watch particularly over the Theological Department."

That this sensitive solicitude about our doctrines was neither excessive nor misplaced can be denied by no one who has studied candidly and earnestly the genius, the mission, and the history of that wondrous work of God called Wesleyan Methodism. That this benign and mighty factor in the spiritual and social history of the British Empire, and America, was indebted for its marvellous success to its faithful, urgent presentation of the grand vital verities of the Christian revelation, preached with impassioned energy of conviction and experience, and borne home to the hearers by the Holy Ghost sent down from Heaven, was emphatically recognised by the mighty men of other Non-conformist Churches, who spoke in Wesley's Chapel at the centenary of Wesley's death, most signally by the lamented Dr. Dale, and by the great Church historian, Dr. Stoughton.

The "decay of the doctrinal basis" of Methodism means *necessarily* the devitalisation of Methodist experience, for with Methodism, as with all forms of genuine Christianity, its life and morals, its organisation and its institutions are the native outgrowth of its doctrines.

It is an interesting fact that the perils incident to the setting up in Methodism of an educational collegiate institute

were most keenly forecast by a practical, successful man of business, Mr. Guest, of South Wales, and by the father of the Conference, the venerable James Wood. Mr. Guest, a member of an honoured and most justly prosperous family, now represented by Lord Wimborne, who chose for their escutcheon, "*Ferro sed non gladio*"—"By *iron*, but *not* by the *sword*"—put his strong, pacific finger on one of the deadliest dangers that can ever come to an evangelistic Church—the inducing and inducting into its ministry of men who seek it, not under the pressure of a Divine necessity laid upon them to preach the Gospel, but simply, as Mr. G. Gilfillan frankly tells us, a pleasant means of livelihood and insurance against the uncertainties of literary life. Methodism has sore need to guard with ever-increasing vigilance against the danger of admitting into its ministry men who seek admission to our ministry as the best means open to them for a *career*.

Father Wood's misgiving was, as we have seen, lest a veneer and varnish of pretentious scholarship should be laid upon a warped and worm-eaten latitudinarianism.

It seems impossible not to compare the discussion in the Conference of 1834 with regard to the founding of our Theological Institution with the remarkable speeches delivered at the Conference of 1896 by the President, the Theological Tutor at Didsbury, and Mr. Macdonald, the ex-Theological Tutor at Handsworth. The former most appropriately and opportunely called the attention of the Body to the very gravest peril which is threatening Methodism—the deadliest, indeed, that has ever yet assailed it. Let us hope that the warning voice uplifted by the President at that Conference especially his faithful, just exposure of the ministerial dishonour and dishonesty involved in retaining the stipend, the status, and the influence of a Methodist minister, whilst coolly disregarding the solemn and the annually repeated pledges and avowals by which they were achieved at first, and on the faith of which they are still retained.

The Theological and Methodistic element was the point most insisted on by all the leading speakers in the Conferences of 1833-4. For example:—

Mr. Scott: "We want more education in *theology*. I feel that the care of a circuit precludes all application to study."

Robert Newton: "Can we have something quite *Methodistical*? It is

also highly desirable that our ministry should not shock the good taste of the people."

Again, the case of William Griffith occupied the Conference. The last year's arrangement secured for Mr. Griffith a circuit of the highest class. Mr. Reece, on being asked to report upon his conduct, said nothing but good of him.

Mr. Bunting showed how Mr. Griffith had involved us by his conduct in some former circuits in most painful notoriety, and to such an extent as made it, "our duty to look after his submission to Methodistical authority. I think his conduct ought, in view of his past procedure, to have been perfectly unimpeachable. We ought to look well to our discipline; it is important to our people, it is important to us. I would ask if William Griffith has not acted publicly contrary to his Superintendent's express judgment? A preacher has no right to take any public step contrary to the express judgment of his Superintendent. Has he not vindicated his conduct in opposition to his Superintendent at a Society Meeting?"

Mr. McLean, his colleague, said: "He has mentioned from the pulpit the difference existing between himself and his Superintendent, and in giving out a public notice, authorised by the Superintendent, said 'My name is not affixed to this notice, I do not concur in the movement.'"

Mr. Reece: "Nobody cared about Mr. Griffith's name being appended to the paper. I have behaved kindly to him; but I believe he is as much afraid of behaving civilly to me as of treating me with extreme personal insolence."

Dr. Beaumont said: "I concur with Mr. Bunting about the importance of this affair. I have heard nothing in Edinburgh against Mr. Griffith's moral character, but the effect of his ministry there is such as to satisfy me that I cannot lift up my hand in favour of his being continued on trial for this ministry."

Mr. Bunting expressed his judgment that "if no better report of him were forthcoming next year, it would be the duty of Conference to do without him."

A very remarkable candidate for the Methodist ministry was the Rev. Robert Aitken, recommended from the *Douglas* Circuit. But important external elements in the case precluded the reception of this mighty preacher.

"Mr. Bunting complained that the Halifax Circuit had been left without a preacher, although it was suffering from a 'division.' The third preacher had come without leave. It was proposed that the brother should be heard."

Mr. Bunting: "He has no right to be heard, but he has a right to hear us. In Mr. Wesley's time no man came to Conference without his leave, the living John Wesley is the Brethren in full Connexion. No member of the Hundred even has a right to come without the consent of his District Meeting."



The case of Mr. Everett's appointment to a circuit called forth the following remarks :—

Mr. Entwisle: "I would speak of a great principle. I think myself qualified to speak on this subject; I have attended forty-eight Conferences. I will state Mr. Thompson's principles (the first President after Wesley). 'Beware of local men in business; they have local views and prejudices.' Mr. Everett is a most agreeable man and colleague, I would myself supply his place on a snowy night. I believe he has no more love of money than of sin. Perhaps it would be better to allow him a year to wind up his affairs."

Mr. Gault: "I would have such cases uniformly acted on."

Mr. Bunting: "I would terminate the anomalous point with regard to Mr. Everett. I move that Mr. Everett be appointed to a circuit."

Mr. Everett: "I am much obliged to the Conference. I find it a high day. I would as soon look a bear in the face as a ledger."

The poor Connexion was not left to settle down in peace and harmony to pursue its mission. Dr. Warren forthwith started on that desperate course of organised agitation and aggressive lawlessness which could have no other than a deplorable ending. The *London Ministers' Meeting* put forth a document entitled a "General Declaration," signed by nearly all of them, which they took upon themselves to send to every minister throughout the provinces, with the request that he would append to it his name. The generality of the Declaration consisted simply in the whole Ministerial Brotherhood being asked to sign it. It implied specifically an unqualified assent to what amounted to an indignant denial that any predominant personality or party existed in the Conference. The Declaration was not signed by Jacob Stanley, who wrote to Mr. Bunting a frank and manly statement of his reasons for withholding his autograph from that document. I give an extract from a copy of this letter sent by him :—

"Though I most heartily disapprove of the course pursued by Dr. Warren, and though I *substantially* approve of the *Declaration*, yet there are a few things in it which do not meet my unqualified approbation. I wish there had been less indignation and reprobation and abhorrence, and that it had contained some expressions of pity for an erring brother, and of deep regret for the mischiefs that have followed, more of the spirit of Him who prayed for His murderers, and less of the spirit of the disciples who would have called down fire from Heaven against those who had offended them. At first I rather doubted whether it is quite true that the preachers are not under the influence of a dominant party, that many, in particular, are not very much under your individual influence. I may be wrong, but it has been my opinion for *many years* that several of the brethren have on some subjects voted as they supposed would be most agreeable to you; nor were my views at all altered

by the occurrences of last Conference. After all, I do not believe that 'the body of the preachers' are thus influenced; neither do I believe that you use any *unfair* methods to influence those brethren who may be specially indebted to you for any friendly aid you may have afforded them. It is natural for those who have received favours to be grateful, and should those vote to please you, rather than in conformity to their own convictions, the fault is not yours."

This frank and manly testimony, given to the great man himself by a senior minister who was a representative man, and who during the last two Conferences had come next to the Chair, having received at one time ninety-six votes, is of a great value as expressing views shared by him with many other brethren. But, of course, all those who did not sign the *Declaration* were at once proclaimed *Warrenites* by the framers and forth-senders of that well-meant, but in fact divisive document. This was part of the penalty that Jacob Stanley had to pay for withholding his signature from a *Declaration* which did not express his views. Hence he soon received a letter from his married daughter informing him that they had received from London the staggering intelligence that *Jacob Stanley had turned Warrenite*. To this he gave the following reply:—

"— is no 'Warrenite.' He has not signed the *Declaration* because he thinks the influence of Mr. Bunting is greater than it recognises. Not that I approve of the proceedings of the Doctor, for these I think at once absurd and censurable. My opinions on the whole case I have written to the President, that he might lay it before the Preachers' Meeting, which he did. I told Mr. Bunting that he might append my name to a second edition of the *London Declaration* with the *qualifications* above named. Some alterations in the second paragraph would have made it unobjectionable. I do not think that the preachers, as assembled in Conference, are *generally* subservient, etc. In a great majority of cases they vote according to their own convictions but on some I fear many of them shoulder their arms after the example fogleman.

"A preacher brought to me the document in bed, just after a severe attack of cholera, and begged me to sign it, and finding one or two names of independent minds who had attentively considered it, I consented.

"I hope the Conference will elect some prudent and no party man, and one who will hold the balance even. 'May God direct and save us'!—JACOB STANLEY."

The history of Dr. Warren's agitation and secession has been often told and amply. Our business is with the light that falls upon it from Mr. Fowler's Journal.

#### THE SHEFFIELD CONFERENCE OF 1835.

In 1835 the sagacious and broad-minded President, Mr. Joseph Taylor, invited a large number of laymen from various

parts of the country to meet at Sheffield immediately before the Conference to confer with him in a free and friendly conversation upon various subjects affecting the general interests of the Connexion. At this meeting Dr. Bunting made what is justly described in his "Life" as one of his best and most statesmanlike speeches, in which he advocated important popular modifications of our system, which only needed his approval to be triumphantly carried at the Conference. He, however, set his foot down firmly against any suggestion of an *elective* and representative lay element in Methodism. No lay members were to form part of the *Conference* during any part of its sessions, nor were lay members of Connexional Committees to be elected by the laity, but selected by the Pastorate. The changes, however, are rightly designated by Dr. George Smith as concessions to the laity.

This concessive and conciliatory speech produced a fine effect upon the meeting, and through them on the Connexion. Men on both sides were equally delighted—Mr. Heald, the compact symbol of a resolute Conservatism; and Mr. James Wood, of Bristol, a gentleman of the most popular sympathies, whom I remember well at this same period as a very interesting personality, with picturesque peculiarities, but withal kindly, genial, and generous.

Mr. Heald: "If at the Land's End, I would attend to the call of Methodism. If differences exist among Christians, we can settle them. Morning light has been given enough for us to see our way. I think it my duty to record my eternal abhorrence of agitation. I say nothing about these *men*, but about their measures. I am glad to see the spirit of this meeting. Is it to be tolerated that a Christian Church is to be reformed by men who begin upon the principle of political reformers: 'We are all right, and you are all wrong'? We laymen will sit at the feet of our fathers; but not of men whose principles would subvert our system. I would suggest a revision of our regulations—a gentle, practical improvement. It is lawful to learn even from our enemies. Whatever you do, avoid collision between Preachers and people. In the course of the last year I have stood forward, but I have never said that our system is faultless. I love Methodism with all my heart. All Methodism is indebted to the Oldham Street Trustees. Our door of admission is very open, and there should be some clear way of removing improper persons, and not have to wait till a man has done so much mischief. How are we to treat those members who are determined to keep up the agitation for another year? We should legislate for sound men, and not do wrong to save a few unsound ones."

Mr. Wood, of Bristol: "The present time is similar to 1797. The rules then enacted proved that the Preachers were disinterested. Forty years ago the friends met as delegates; we now meet as simply friends. If a man be a persistent peace-breaker, let him have no place among us. Should not

rules be formed to separate from us those who join associations for distracting us? In Bristol no man can be put upon the Plan as a Local Preacher until the Quarterly Meeting have given their permission. I think this meeting should give some expression of attachment to the parts of our discipline which are assailed. This would prevent much local agitation. A man must be a Methodist to understand Methodism. We must not attach much importance to the objections of those who are outside it. I would have the discussion brought to some practical conclusion."

Mr. Thorold: "Those who object to Methodism should point out something better. The credit of our system is that it works well. I am not willing to give up what works well for what has never been worked at all, or if worked has worked badly. How would Methodism work in the fetters of our new Methodisers? I believe that Methodism was raised up by God. I do not dare to say that nothing in it can be mended. But let these Methodising gentlemen show us their system in operation, and then we may judge whether it is better than our own. Let us make no change but what is obviously for the good of the Body. But all may speak out. Our foes have embarrassed us, but they have also embarrassed themselves. I would have matters regulated with moderation. But we must uphold Church discipline. It may not want to be much altered; but those who feel it should be allowed to say where they think it pinches too hard."

Mr. James Wood, of Manchester, was called. He said: "I am reluctant to obey, yet cannot make up my mind to disobey. No man here owes more to Methodism than I do. In existing circumstances, I think there may be some minor changes. I would not control the power of ministers, nor add much to it. Let us avoid extremes. Great evils have arisen from the present constitution of Quarterly Meetings. They once consisted of Preachers and Stewards only. We cannot go back to that, and cannot stop where we are. Any Leader or Local Preacher of seventeen exercises a right to attend and vote who may have the gift of the gab. I think this monstrous. I have thought of a representative system; but I hate electioneering practices. I think the Leaders, Local Preachers, and Trustees ought to be represented. As much as possible, relieve the ministry from financial matters. But I would not trust laymen alone. I had rather trust ministers alone. Have not ministers a Scriptural power to expel improper persons? There is one point of great difficulty—Mr. Anderson has been very much troubled. We know not how his temperament has borne it. We could not tell him how to get out of it; nor could any of those around him tell him. I feel more attached to Methodism than ever. But I would have our rules and regulations explained. Some of them are obscure. It is time they were explained. With the agitators of our Body I will have no fellowship. *Abide by old Methodism*, and all the really Methodist laity will abide by you. But do not mar Methodism to meet the wishes of a faction."

Mr. T. Marriott referred to a document in the handwriting of Wesley, dated 1751, and signed by Nelson and others, declaratory of the necessity of unity among the Preachers. He deplored the neglect of Society Meetings; and thought the Preachers thought too little of the duties of 'prentices and servants, and of Pastoral visitation.

Mr. H. Hoole, of Manchester: "I think the evil is exaggerated; and that a man who, like myself, has attended agitating meetings, and yet had not

denied that some things ought to be altered, should not be suspected. But Dr. Bunting has fully met my wishes. Carry his plan into effect as soon as possible. I am a tradesman, as independent as any man can be, but I should suffer much if expelled. We want guards against the admission of officers, especially Local Preachers, who are often local *talkers*."

Mr. Agar: "I have been a member of this blessed Body more than fifty-six years. I was present forty years ago" (the date of the Plan of Pacification) "when Mr. Thompson was in the Chair. Yet I have never seen Methodism in such a disturbed state as at present. I wish we had some explanation of the rules in point. I am most sorry for the lambs of the flock. A committee of Preachers should do something towards bringing us into a better state."

Mr. Chapell: "I would have something done for the *old Preachers*. It is a stain on Methodism that some of them are so scantily provided for. I am afraid of Dr. Bunting's making concessions to clamour, not to necessity. Much talking makes more holes than it mends. I think the Preachers excellent." (How Chapellian!)

Dr. Bunting: "Mr. Chapell has misunderstood me. I have proposed nothing but from conviction. It is hard to extort anything from me; I am altogether the other way."

Mr. Beet: "I have held office in Methodism fifty years. It has done well in time past, I would guard against great changes."

Mr. Farmer: "I think some explanation of our rules necessary. I do not feel to desire more than has been proposed; but I think it would be to the advantage of Preachers and people to consult together oftener."

Mr. Edwards: "I believe that Conference had rather hear the statement of friends than any quantity of adulation. I believe that in this way many members will be detained, and as many as possible brought back who have gone astray. If some of them were here to-day they would have felt sorry they had gone. I think most of the dissatisfaction has arisen when the Superintendent would not allow the Leaders to act as a proper jury. I would suggest whether anything can be contrived to relieve Superintendents from the responsibility of acting both as judge and jury. I think that some have gone rather too far in lecturing the Preachers. I believe that many who have been led away have the love of God in their hearts."

Mr. Crook, of Liverpool: "I too was present at the meeting in 1795, with William Thompson in the Chair. The spirit of party starts boldly. We have suffered much in Liverpool from divisions, mainly through the Press, in one form or other. A small secession might do us good. I would have some assistance to the Superintendent when the Leaders' Meeting proves to be an unsound jury."

The President: "The only way at present is to call in three Superintendents."

Mr. Hoby, of London: "I am delighted with what I have heard this day. I think Dr. Bunting's suggestions will help us out of difficulties. I would have our regulations embodied, as much as possible, in Scripture language. I think there is something debasing in any member refusing to answer a question."

Mr. Scarth, of Leeds: "When men come from a disturbed Circuit no wonder they particularise. I come from a peaceful Circuit and a loving

Society. I am glad to hear in all the addresses a tenderness of feeling for Methodism. Let us support Methodism. Let us not amalgamate it with the spirit of the times ; but infuse into the times the spirit of primitive Christianity. We do not profess that Methodism is infallible ; but that it answers well the purpose for which it was raised up : to spread Scriptural religion through the earth. A Methodist may do as much good as he pleases. The Preachers are representatives of the Body. The Preachers are sent out by the people ; and the people should look to it that we send out sound men. Conference is then ' the Conference of the people called Methodists.' That is the heading of the Minutes. There is some uneasiness amongst some Methodists touching the points put forth by the Association. Dr. Bunting's proposals will meet the case. I would not succumb to a faction, but would make the changes because they ought to be made. I wish the great fact of our Connexional character were kept in view."

At the next day's meeting Dr. Bunting gave an exposition of his views on Methodist Church polity. It is identical in substance with statements made in Conference ; indeed, for the most part, identical in terms.

Dr. Bunting : " I wish that Church government had been more studied. We must not give up fundamentals. The first rule is *Fidelity*. We may decline a trust ; but, if accepted, we must execute it. I think there is such a thing as the Pastoral office. The dissentients would have us turn knaves to Mr. Wesley. (2) A still higher law is *Purity of Doctrine*. We must look with jealousy on men who complain of doctrinal standards, which they call ' tests.' We have erred in excessive brotherly lenity towards such men. (3) Purity of Ministerial Life. There are men who have great power of wheedling. I believe I could get a majority in any Leaders' Meeting if I had no conscience. (4) Then there is the rule of Peace. Many things look well in theory ; but do they make for peace ? (5) Courtesy. We are not justified in behaving uncourtously even to Preachers." Dr. Bunting then entered a strong protest against Lay delegation, adding : " I would meet the object in another way. Let all our funds be placed completely under the management of lay friends. Have we not done this without solicitation ? Our good deeds are forgotten ; our bad ones printed in fifty editions. No object is relieved unless friends will assist in the collecting and the distribution. I would have lay friends to assist in asking about the yearly collection. They will put a double lock on our fingers if they think we are what we ought not to be. We are the true reformers, and do the liberalising in the true sense of the word, taking care, however, of the rule of *peace*."

" They who meet yonder would make our law a different thing in different places. It is for the Angel of the Church, not the Leaders—he may consult them if necessary—to prevent good men being put out, as well as bad men kept in. Is the New Testament given up ? If I can prove that a man has violated our rules, yet, if the Leaders do not find him guilty, I will submit. But if he be a really bad man, he will do something else, and I shall get at him at last. Christ has given the members to the Pastors in a sense in which they are not given to the Leaders. I would have more guards. Before sentence of expulsion I would take time

to cool. Feeling may have mixed up with judgment. (2) I would have the Superintendent obliged to consult all the travelling Preachers in the Circuit, though not bound by their advice. But it might present a different aspect. (3) Consult your Stewards; but the Superintendent, as Angel of the Church, is responsible after all. (4) There is an appeal to the District Meeting. Some may object to this; may object to be made notorious. That is right. The appeal should be cheap and untroublesome. Have something analogous to a Minor District Meeting. As to memorials, we are not to be always revolutionising. A fresh window may be made, but we must not pull down the house and the Constitution of 1797. Leaders should mind their own business. If they require it, other meetings may be called. But there is one terrible defect—we did not make it—the requiring the approbation of the Superintendent. It is absurd for the Superintendent to *prevent* what the *law permits*. Define this meeting. It is not the new-fangled thing, an adjournment of the Quarterly Meeting. Let it be a representation of the Trustees who are members, of Leaders, and of Local Preachers. But there must be a limitation of topics. I would have a liberal definition, but it must be defined. I fear our friends will not communicate enough to us. The Stewards do not attend the District Meetings. Do not leave us to men who have a surplus of zeal, and after attending to parish business must plunge us into politics."

A resolution for a reprint of the Minutes of Conference naturally called to mind the appeal of Mr. James Wood, of Manchester, and others the day before, and the memorials of several Quarterly Meetings for an explanation of the Rules and Regulations. Our most loyal laity felt this to be of immediate necessity, since the explanation supplied by certain decisions of Conference, and acts of Superintendents seemed directly contradictory to the sense naturally suggested to the simple-minded reader by the rules themselves.

Dr. Bunting drew once more his distinction between a code and a digest. He said: "There have been only two *codes* since the world began. There have been three times more lawsuits in France since the Code Napoléon than for fifty years before. Any man who attempts to make a code will take into it not only written law but unwritten law—the application of all usages. The decisions of Conference as to particular cases will take the cleverest man you have at least two years. Your greatest security is your usages. A great lawyer informed me: 'If you had a code of law, you might not include all matters; but then you could not advert to usage.' It is the decided opinion of two out of three counsel that we had better not have a code. A third very clever counsel thought we might attempt it, but do as Sir R. Peel did with the Excise Laws, take up one at a time. Do not gallop to a code. Attempt a better arrangement, but beware of codification."

Mr. Galland: "I regret a certain article in the Magazine. I think it was an oversight on the part of our excellent Editor."

The Editor: "I make no claim to infallibility. But the Editor of the *Wesleyan Methodist Magazine* is bound to make its *contents* answer to its *title*."

The critical Conference of 1835 was held at Sheffield, under the kingly presidency of Richard Reece. Mr. Stanley was again the second on the list ; no one else had more than two votes. His non-signature of the declaration delayed his election to the Chair for just a decade. Such was the eagerness to decide the case of Dr. Warren that the question of character was taken on the first day. Mr. Beal, of the Second London Circuit, was charged with "not having supported his Superintendent in the enforcement of discipline."

Mr. Bunting : "I wish a law were made that no preacher shall make a fool of himself by publishing. I think this book's folly will counteract its mischief." It was decided that a strongly worded letter should be sent to him. J. H. Rowe was charged with "not having supported his Superintendent in the exercise of discipline." To be *admonished from the Chair*. C. J. Irving had "not made up his mind on points of discipline."

Mr. Bunting : "It is no sin for a man to think our discipline wrong provided that he quits us." Sentence : "To be conversed with."

On the question being put, "Any objection against Samuel Jackson?" and the answer, "None," being returned by George Marsden, Chairman of the Liverpool District, there took place, what Mr. Fowler terms, "a most extraordinary proceeding."

Mr. Bunting exclaimed : "I am surprised to hear that there is 'no objection' against Mr. Samuel Jackson and his colleagues."

Thereupon Mr. Samuel Jackson lifted up his grim visage and his gruff voice and said : "Samuel Jackson and his colleagues are ready to take their trial, if any one dare arraign them." Even Mr. Bunting's daring did not reach the pitch of bringing forth a hypothetic accusation of three such men as Samuel Jackson, David McNicoll, and W. O. Booth. This, like some other vague and tentative suggestions of delinquency, seems to have arisen from the non-signing of the *Declaration*.

Then came the all-engrossing case of Dr. Warren. The Minute of the Manchester District Meeting being read, which recorded the findings against him, and his sentence of suspension, the President asked whether Dr. Warren had any intention to appeal from the condemnation?

Dr. Warren : "Unquestionably ; that is the reason of my appearing here to-day."

Mr. Grindrod : "A man should not be allowed to appeal to the Conference who has appealed elsewhere."

Dr. Warren : "Is the charge against me for contumacy?"

Mr. Newton : "Dr. Warren has appealed to the law of his country, which he says 'will set him right.'"



Mr. Bunting: "I do not admit that Dr. Warren has any right to an appeal, having appealed to a Court of Justice. We have no time for these things. He has appealed to the popular voice."

Dr. Warren: "I have appealed to the people whether the Rules are not so objectionable that they ought to be revised."

Mr. Bunting: "Has the Lord Chancellor been appealed to in order that he may petition us?"

Dr. Warren: "The Lord Chancellor thought the Rules of Pacification 'very mystified' as explained by your action."

Mr. Bunting: "By your own showing, you appealed to the Chancellor, because we were not wise enough; and to other persons, because we were not honest." Dr. Beaumont complained.

Mr. Bunting: "I complain of Dr. Beaumont. Why am I to be singled out in this manner? I cannot submit to it. If protected, I am your servant; if not, I must retire to my work elsewhere."

Dr. Beaumont: "I have no *personal* pique with Mr. Bunting. I have been injured by his misrepresentations for years; and I wish for an opportunity to explain. I love my brethren, and I am ready to serve them in every way. I am sorry that any painful impression has been made, but am glad that the matter has been named."

Mr. Bunting: "I must say that I am not satisfied."

The President: "We are bound to protect Mr. Bunting, if we wish to have his services."

Mr. Bunting: "My friends over-state my case; I could state it much better myself. I do not refer to personal matters, but complain of Dr. Beaumont saying in a public meeting that he would not allow Mr. Bunting to be misrepresented, and now, when I am present, why single me out because I speak as a member of the Conference? Show a little more courtesy; I protest against these personal insults."

Mr. Vevers: "Dr. Beaumont has made an apology."

Mr. Bunting maintained that Dr. Beaumont's "matter and manner were objectionable."

After this animated interlude, Dr. Warren was permitted to speak for himself still further: "I hold in my hand a document with the signatures of the preachers, pledging themselves to one particular side of the question, thus prejudging the question against me. I would submit it to the judgment of any impartial person whether I have not a right to appeal against this. If I were to protest against my brethren prejudging my case before entering on its investigation I should be right."

Mr. Bunting here struck in: "I positively deny that anyone has suggested that Dr. Warren should not have the right to appeal; but I would have the right decided, so that afterwards it should not be drawn into a precedent."

Dr. Warren tried again: "I think there was ground for suspicion that I should not be allowed a fair hearing. I complain of these interruptions."

Mr. Bunting: "I appeal to the Conference whether I have interrupted Dr. Warren."

The President: "The Conference will proceed as the Conference thinks best. It has a right to say how."

Mr. Bunting: "In my judgment, he has forfeited his right to appeal

is public meetings have failed. I am not only willing, but wishful he should be heard.'

Mr. Newton: "As a matter of clemency, I would have the whole case heard."

Mr. Bunting then read a resolution which he had drawn up, denying Dr. Warren's right to appeal, but, as a matter of indulgence, allowing it. This passed unanimously.

Mr. Grindrod then proceeded to read a case which he had drawn up against Dr. Warren.

Dr. Warren objected to any fresh charge being introduced of which he had received no notice. "I appeal to the Chair."

The President: "In ordinary cases it is so, but in this affair no informality should be pleaded."

Dr. Warren: "I complain that no notice has been given me of the contents of this new document."

Mr. Bromley: "I rise to make an observation; but, if not in order, I submit to what is prescribed."

Mr. Bunting: "Mr. Bromley may be heard when his own case comes on."

Dr. Warren: "I have been enabled to maintain a somewhat creditable character as a preacher for thirty years." He complained that a great number of the brethren whom he revered and loved, now called to decide upon his doom, had signed and circulated a "General Declaration," which pledged them beforehand to his condemnation. "I should have liked to be tried by judges *uncommitted* to their sentence. My young colleague (Mr. Crowther) published a pamphlet against his Superintendent's character, and he now sits as my judge."

Mr. Bunting interjected: "None of the Manchester preachers will vote."

Dr. Warren resumed: "My summons was not according to Methodist law."

Mr. Newton: "If I should fall short in referring to what is essential to the case, I hope my brethren will suggest to me. The Quarterly Meeting was called a week earlier than usual without my privity."

Mr. Bunting again broke in: "By whose suggestion?"

Dr. Warren: "The Stewards'."

Mr. Crowther then took up the cross-questioning of his old Superintendent.

Dr. Warren answered: "The meeting was Methodistically correct. I did not consult my young colleague on the subject, for when I held out my hand to him, he said: 'No; I stand upon my Conferential character.'"

Mr. Bunting: "At what date was the meeting held in opposition to the Theological Institution?"

Dr. Warren: "Soon after the meeting held in Great Queen Street Chapel, London in its favour, which had no more authority from Conference than the meeting held in Manchester, and was therefore as irregular."

The President "knew no rule against either meeting."

Dr. Warren again took up his parable: "Some of your officers have shut up the only way to your ear. Superintendents will not let the people speak in the Quarterly Meetings. If they press the matter the Superintendent dissolves the meeting. Thus the grievance of the people cannot be legitimately represented. If they express them elsewhere—in parlour or in school-room—it is pronounced schismatical. I wish you to act towards the people in a fatherly, pastoral manner. Confer with them."

Mr. Bunting: "If a man is expelled he can write to the Chairman; if he does not answer, to the President. If a man is hunting for a grievance, and pretends to be following after peace, he is on a fool's errand. If a Chairman won't answer a letter, bring him here, and we will teach him his duty, and make him promise to do better."

Dr. Warren tried again: "I did hope Mr. Bunting would use his talents on the side of conciliation."

Mr. Bunting: "I do not intend to be a mutineer."

Dr. Warren then read a paragraph from the Declaration in which the preachers were committed beforehand to pronounce sentence against him.

Mr. Bunting: "If a mutineer is tried by loyal men he may say that loyal men are pledged, and so he is not to be tried."

Mr. Waugh: "I would ask if Dr. Warren thinks Mr. Taylor is a good man?"

Dr. Warren: "I think Mr. Taylor is a good and a sensible man."

Dr. Warren must be admitted to have shown no little skill in his defence, considering the hopelessness of his cause, and the incessant interruption of which he was the subject. During a great part of the time the affair was little more than an interlocution between Mr. Bunting and Dr. Warren. Besides this, at least fourteen other brethren interrupted, several of them more than once. The only one who spoke on Dr. Warren's side was Mr. Bromley: but on his rising Mr. Bunting interposed: "I wish to know to what point Mr. Bromley is going to speak."

Dr. Warren expressed a hope that any person might speak for him.

Mr. Bunting: "If Dr. Warren wishes to call Mr. Bromley as a witness, or add anything to the defence, he may do so now; but let us know in what character he appears."

Dr. Warren: "If Mr. Bunting will have patience——"

Mr. Bunting: "I have had patience; but the more I hear the less I understand. Dr. Warren seems to wish that Mr. Bromley should speak, but Dr. Warren has a peculiar way of mystifying things."

Dr. Warren: "I do not wish Mr. Bromley to speak."

Mr. Bromley: "I should be sorry to appear otherwise but as one of the brethren: I think it important to know the facts. Mr. Grindrod on Methodist Law is excellent in many respects; not all." Here Mr. Bromley was called to order, and apologised. He proceeded: "I thought the Conference wished to legislate on *facts*—on perfect knowledge."

But Mr. Bromley's speech was rather in defence of himself than that of Dr. Warren. He said: "If I had had permission from the Chair to speak, I should have made an apology."

Mr. Bunting: "If a man sins without permission he may repent without leave."

Dr. Beaumont : "I wish to ask Dr. Warren whether he feels any regret for the conduct into which he has been precipitated."

Dr. Warren : "I feel deep regret, but it is regret that applies to both sides of the question ; regret for the *cause* which exists. I deeply regret that at the Conference I was not permitted to vindicate my character. That was the crisis. I did repeatedly implore that I might be allowed to wipe off the aspersions upon me, and that I might be heard without prejudice. I solemnly told the Conference that if not allowed to do it here, I should do it as I deemed proper. I do regret the unhappy moment when I was not allowed to speak. If I had been I should not have written a line. I intimated my intention then to vindicate myself elsewhere ; the Chair was silent."

The President : "Are you sorry for what you call 'contentious division of the society,' etc. etc.?"

Dr. Warren : "I again say I am equally sorry for the cause and for the consequences ; they are inseparable. A deputation waited upon Mr. Newton from the mass of leaders. Mr. Newton refused to see them. That originated the association, but for which the members who are now in a fold together contiguous to your own, would have been scattered."

Mr. Newton : "I did hear something about a deputation to propose accommodation, but said : 'I cannot receive you from the standard of rebellion ; as *individuals* I shall be most happy to receive you.' The people who went with and continued with Dr. Warren told me that they were still members of the Methodist Society."

Mr. Bunting : "If anything I said or did required this publishing by Dr. Warren ; if I had done wrong, there was an opportunity when my name was called."

The ex-President : "Dr. Warren had the promise of being heard some other time."

The most painful interruption of all was that by Mr. Crowther, Dr. Warren's youngest colleague. He wedged into the middle of Dr. Warren's self-defence a halting and prolix excuse for having published a pamphlet against his Superintendent. But when obliged to confess that he had done this before his Superintendent had done anything Methodistically actionable, he confusedly collapsed. After the ex-President's observations the President requested Dr. Warren to withdraw, and said, "The Conference is now waiting for some resolution."

Mr. Hickling said something which amounted to nothing, and then moved : "That the Minutes of the Manchester District be confirmed." Mr. Leach seconded.

Dr. Beaumont said : "I owe more to Dr. Warren than to any other man ; by his instrumentality I was converted to God. You will give me credit for feeling a deep and solemn anxiety. The burden of disastrous events and of mischievous fermentation does lie somewhere. Two or three circumstances weigh on my mind. I doubt not the legality of the District Meeting, nor its power to suspend ; not the constitution of the meeting nor the elements of which it was composed. No blame attaches to any individual member of the

meeting. But three things will operate upon me, and no doubt weighed much on Dr. Warren's mind. 1. The election as Secretary of the meeting of Dr. Warren's youngest colleague, who had published a pamphlet against his Superintendent. He might be the fittest secretary for any meeting under heaven, but I beg to say, I do not see how Dr. Warren could avoid some feeling on this point." (A Voice: "He voted for Dr. Warren.") "I was going to say that was in keeping with his manifold inconsistencies, it was like him."

Dr. Beaumont also objected to the exclusion of Mr. Bromley from the meeting for the crime of taking notes, and thought he might have been allowed to stay there as a fixture after he had torn up his paper and put away his pen. "I doubt whether it was not too severe a sentence for anything he had done up to that time. I would have taken away his superintendency and removed him from Manchester, but I would have let him still put his silver trumpet to his mouth. But I do not intend to divide the house."

Mr. Dixon complained of the ungentlemanliness of part of the proceedings. "This may be thought of little importance, but it is not unimportant that we should behave gentlemanly. True, Dr. Warren published an inflammatory pamphlet contrary to his Connexional character. It is our duty to bow to the decision of the majority. I should think it dishonest to take advantage of the decision to make a disturbance. I do not see that the District Meeting had any alternative to the suspending of Dr. Warren, and the highest court of justice has decided in their favour."

Mr. T. Martin: "I would have the honour and integrity of the Conference upheld, and at the same time its generosity and its humanity." He threw out his judgment that Conference should follow its own precedent of the preceding year with regard to Mr. Stephens, confirm the suspension by the District Meeting and continue it for another year. "That if he conduct himself properly and try to undo the mischief he has done, he be restored."

Mr. Ranson took the like view. "If personal influence might have aught to do with this sentence, I might vote for the expulsion. I have suffered much, publicly and personally, both in mind and income, by the agitation, but I take higher grounds. Dr. Warren has been guilty of a violation of the law of decency in Church matters. If there had been anything like contrition I might have founded my plea upon his age and his former respectability. But I think the sentence should be grounded in moderation. If ever the law of expediency is permitted to operate, the time is the present. There is a spirit of suspicion abroad. It appears to me that the only remedy is to show that we are not the men we are suspected to be. We must not only show that we are men of integrity, but men of mercy also. Our enemies represent themselves as more liberal than we are, let us show them the *true* liberality." He referred to Robert Hall's distinction between true and false charity. "The one begins at the centre and radiates right on to the circumference, the other spends itself upon the latter. I would have Connexional charity begin at the centre—the Conference itself. I would have the Doctor treated as Mr. Stephens was."

This speech was heard very impatiently. The motion for confirming the Manchester Minutes was passed unanimously, with the exception of Mr. Bromley's vote.

Mr. Bunting: "I would have the point decided whether he should be

expelled. The form can be decided afterwards by a committee, who must look at the words and draw it up cautiously."

Mr. Gaultier moved that Dr. Warren be expelled. Mr. R. Smith seconded the motion.

Mr. Bromley adverted to the feeling of sympathy that Dr. Warren's suspension had excited, how much more his expulsion! "I think there are circumstances of palliation, not justification. I would notice the difference of administration. It is not uniform. It is stated by a great authority (Dr. Bunting) that the Quarterly Meeting ought not to go outside their own circuit; yet the Resolutions were republished in the *Watchman against Dr. Warren* from various Quarterly Meetings." He then adverted to the meeting of gentlemen convened just before Conference to approve the concessions which Mr. Bunting thought might be safely adopted. "I speak as one who has not been involved in Dr. Warren's book or meetings, but thousands may be involved in our decision. I am acting an unpopular part and have met with frowns, but am acting conscientiously."

Mr. Bunting: "Were I to foresee another year of this collision, with my unbounded love for Methodism, I would seek repose in some dissenting church or country curacy, or the sabbath of the grave."

Mr. Galland: "I feel it a duty to speak. I did not sign the *Declaration* that I might not appear to prejudice the case, and I wish to maintain Methodism dispassionately."

He then adverted to the contradiction between Dr. Warren's professions and his subsequent practices. "If I had done as he has done, I should have incurred personal guilt; his violation of order, his being the great cause of the formation of the Association, etc. etc.—all undenied and undeniable—his proceedings in Chancery, his appealing to the authorities of the world; these stab at the vitals of Methodism. What followed is too painful to notice; he has not expressed any contrition. I have wished to take part in this discussion that I may share in any odium that may follow."

Gallant Thomas Galland!

A letter was read from Mr. Henry Moore recommending (1) "That Conference should as soon as possible publish a *Declaration* of its *own*, pledging itself to keep to the rules of Methodism. (2) "That all offenders should be forgiven and restored, for the faults on both sides need forgiveness."

Mr. Bunting: "I will read some resolutions I have drawn up: 'That Dr. Warren has concurred in promoting the Association, that he has continued to agitate, and that on these and similar grounds the Conference adjudges that he cannot any longer be a member of the Body.'"

Mr. Dixon: "My resolution is to fight the Conference battle or die in the last trench. I have tried to trace out the windings of Dr. Warren. He says that he has done all with a good conscience. He must have a strange conscience. The man who can destroy societies with a good conscience has a conscience that we cannot retain among us—a man who will not stand by the Poll Deed. Still further, he was a leader amongst the Association, who are now attempting to form a kingdom within a kingdom. Look at the principles of the Association, stopping the supplies, etc. Their principles

are firebrands. If Dr. Warren had done no more mischief than he has done in Liverpool, he would have deserved a thousand expulsions, yet Mr. Bromley calls the conduct of Dr. Warren 'irregularities.' Preserve your doctrine and discipline. Dr. Warren's conscience is in error; he has looked at error till it appears truth. *Expediency* has been mentioned; we must remain by our principles."

Mr. Bunting: "I shall not vote upon this question." The preachers of the Manchester District also refrained from voting, as did also a considerable number for a variety of reasons, and against the sentence of expulsion there was but one vote—that of Mr. Rowland.

It was decided that the President should communicate to Dr. Warren his sentence in writing, informing him that if he chose to appear he should be heard. At the time appointed he appeared.

The President said: "No man could feel the solemnity of the hour more than I do. I have marked your public conduct since you came out, and have felt an affectionate interest in you. I little thought that it would have fallen to my lot to perform this painful duty. I have known you as a preacher and a circuit minister, and your private excellence; for we have been colleagues, and worked together without a jar. I could not have expected what has taken place. Your recent conduct has been quite inexplicable—has created surprise and distress. And now I have, in obedience to the direction of the Conference, to pronounce your sentence—a most painful duty."

He then pronounced the sentence.

Dr. Warren said: "Sir, I hope you and the Conference will pardon me while I utter a few sentences. Sir, if the Methodism which now expels me were the same Methodism that admitted me, I should feel distressed at my situation. Thank God, I am not charged with immorality, heterodoxy, or inefficiency. I do not participate strongly in your affectionate distress at the sentence just pronounced upon me. I do not think my circumstances are disgraceful. I can cast myself upon God, and upon all who think disinterestedly upon the subject. I did think it right to bear my testimony against the undue assumption of power. This is the cause of the situation in which I stand—a lordly spirit in the Conference."

The President: "I consider these remarks most painful."

Dr. Warren: "I conclude with the sentiment that I do absolutely believe my sentence to be not constitutional nor just. I am deprived of my fraternal inheritance, and shall use my utmost power to recover it. This time twelvemonth we may meet again under more favourable auspices."

Mr. Bunting moved: "That a copy of the sentence be entered on the Journals."

Mr. Loutit reminded the Conference that it was necessary for the One Hundred to confirm the sentence, and to fill up Dr. Warren's place in the One Hundred without delay.

Mr. R. Wood read to the Conference his father's letter to Dr. Warren, to which I have alluded, stating that he "was glad to bear his dying testimony against the Institution," but imploring Dr. Warren to submit to the decision of the majority of his brethren. The venerable minister, being present, uttered a few

words of intense disapproval of Dr. Warren's conduct, but was so overcome with emotion as to be unable to proceed.

Two other ministers were expelled for lawlessly aiding and abetting Dr. Warren and his agitation—Robert Emmett, the political preacher, and John Avenill, who had led off to the *Association* the whole society of 696 members in the Camelford Circuit, with the exception of less than a hundred. The three expulsions were absolutely inevitable; the Conference *could do no other*. The alternative was the accession of misrule and the disbanding of the Methodist Connexion.

Emmett, when requested by the President to withdraw from the Conference Chapel, said: "I beg to decline, for I prefer to remain."

A unanimous vote determined that he ought to withdraw.

Mr. Emmett simply answered: "I have been very improperly suspended."

The President: "I have known nothing like this during the forty-eight years I have been in the Connexion."

Mr. Bunting: "To save time, I feel it my duty to move that Mr. Emmett be expelled for refusing to obey the unanimous wish of the Conference."

Mr. Emmett withdrew. On being recalled and asked to pledge himself not to disturb our societies in the future, he refused.

Mr. Bromley maintained that, as no one act deserving of expulsion had been proved against him, the brother should be borne with.

Dr. Beaumont: "I differ from Mr. Bromley. Though no one treasonable act may have been committed, many seditious acts taken together may amount to treason."

His sentence of expulsion was unanimous. The President pronounced it, declaring that "The great object of Conference is to preserve the doctrine and discipline of the body."

Mr. Emmett bowed and withdrew.

Mr. Bunting once more made an unasked-for personal defence. "I am a most luckless wight. I would refer to one or two points if it were not a sin to occupy time. In the committee for drawing up the *Plan* of the institution, the proposition of names for officers to be put before the Conference was against my judgment. I did not know that many were prejudiced against me." Referring to his use of the word "unprincipled" with reference to Dr. Warren's objection to the committee's presuming to designate the officers of the institution, Dr. Bunting told the Conference he meant, "was not based on any principle."

This application of the very ugly word "unprincipled" became a strong provocative to wrath in subsequent committees. Once in the Book Committee an ex-President set a distinguished London minister ablaze by characterising his remarks as



"unprincipled," and his apology when called to order—"I used the word in Dr. Bunting's sense"—neither satisfied the aggrieved minister nor the perturbed committee. In all such "aggravating" applications of an offensive term, the explanation should precede, not follow the expression.

Mr. Bunting then took up his next point: "I have not seen much of the *Christian Advocate*, but I now and then hear of it. I have been charged with Sabbath breaking. I do not approve of Sunday travelling, except it be a *religious necessity*. I did write about Lord John Russell's election. I do not give up the right to speak out."

This was Lord John's most mortifying defeat at Bedford, of all places, by *one* vote. He attributed his discomfiture to Methodist influence; and, as his autobiography shows, never forgot or wholly forgave the sore humiliation.

A generous brother suggested that there should be "a record" of the approval of the Conference of Mr. Bunting's conduct in the whole affair. But Mr. Bromley thought it would be injurious to Mr. Bunting.

Mr. Bunting: "I think there is something in what Mr. Bromley says. I do not wish my character to be in continual need of defence."

Mr. Scott: "I do not approve of Mr. Bunting's name being put into juxtaposition with that of Dr. Warren, as if he had been Dr. Warren's prosecutor."

O, rare John Scott! How much better had it been for Methodism and for Dr. Bunting's own peace, popularity, and real power, had this wiser view of the matter constantly prevailed! The subject was allowed to "stand over." Mr. Newton, too, felt bound to exculpate himself for having gone down to Tavistock (to which family borough Lord John Russell hurried after his discomfiture at Bedford) to stir up the Mr. Newton Methodists of that place to oppose the popular young Liberal statesman. Robert Newton's chief defence of this political excursion seems rather puzzling. It was that he went down *incognito*. One would like to know in what strange wrappings that magnificent man enswathed a form so familiar to almost every coach road in the kingdom.

Mr. Bromley pleasantly requested that his own case might be disposed of before Mr. Bunting's case was settled, as he was "very wishful to give a cordial vote in that great man's favour."

Mr. Bromley's case was one of the oddest incidents in one of the strangest of all Connexional careers.

The first charge against him was brought by his Superin-

tendent, "the not having made missionary collections." This was forthwith followed up by—

Mr. Bunting: "We have—I. A complaint of the Missionary Committee. Mr. Bromley has charged the committee with having entered into a temptation to corrupt administration. We preachers are accustomed to rhetorical flourishes, but the lay-gentlemen feel aggrieved." Mr. Bromley's correspondence with the Missionary Secretaries was then read. It referred to Dr. Bunting's withdrawal of time from the Mission House.

Mr. Bromley: "At the last Conference I sent a message to the Senior Secretary. The matter was referred to the Missionary Committee. The veto on Mr. Bunting's abstraction of his services from the mission was either conveyed to the committee then or had a previous existence. I inferred the latter. I thought the committee was in danger of infringing on what was morally right. I thought that the whole time should be occupied in the duty for which there was a salary."

Mr. Dixon: "I think Mr. Bromley's mistakes are just the mistakes of Dr. Warren. He thinks he may demur to the decision of Conference. Mr. Bromley had expressed his opinion in the Conference, and had no right to oppose the decision of the Conference. I wish Mr. Bromley would retract his annoying expressions."

Dr. Beaumont: "I think Mr. Bromley wrong in his principles and his conduct. Some excess and excrescence in his virtue will have to be lopped off."

Mr. Bunting: "The gentlemen of the committee require either a distinct apology from Mr. Bromley, or from this body a very marked censure. The gentlemen have another remedy for such abusive epithets, but look to you first—had rather that you should decide. I am not attached to the Mission House as an 'articled clerk'; that is a degrading expression."

Mr. Atherton: "Mr. Bromley has found fault with the committee because they did not rebel against the Conference."

Mr. Bromley: "Under this weight of censure I will submit in silence, but will not stain my inward integrity."

Mr. Bunting said: "There must be some document sent from the Conference to the Missionary Committee."

Mr. Bromley then rose and read an apology to the committee for his "irritating language."

Mr. Bunting insisted that "irritating" was not the right word, and that it should be altered into "wrong." Mr. Bromley consented. Next came the fact of Mr. Bromley's having refused to make any collection for Foreign Missions, and having carried out his "threat." It was asked why this was not made a matter of charge at the York District Meeting.

Mr. Felvus: "We were overawed by the mob outside."

Mr. Calder: "Mr. Bromley taunted me for not bringing him to trial. I would not allow him to bring my sensitive and quicksilver constitution into contact with his coldness, though I do not lack courage."

This last remark can only be appreciated thoroughly by one who remembers vividly both Mr. Bromley and Mr. Calder.

The latter was wonderfully wise in declining a duel with the former. Both were gentlemanly mannered, able men; but Calder was, as he describes himself, mercurial and excitable to a high degree. Bromley, on the other hand, was one of those irritating saints who plume and almost canonise themselves for being able to say in cold blood the most wrath-provoking things, which an average believer is ashamed to have been irritated into uttering under a sudden exquisite annoyance. Bromley seemed to think that coolness and urbanity of manner would condone, and even consecrate a cynical contemptuousness. His sayings and doings in York, as elicited in this discussion, were enough to make him the Jonathan Martin of every chapel in the city.

A tangled, wearisome talkation then ensued as to Mr. Bromley's treatment of and by the District Meeting at Manchester; their mutual misunderstandings, misdemeanours, and recriminations. Bromley confessed so much as this:—

"I do certainly say many absurd things in a jocose way!" He also admitted the having entertained Dr. Warren during his agitating visits to York, and did not deny the having introduced him to some leading Methodists, but he had not attended any of his meetings. He added, "I have always deferred to the judgment of Conference." Mr. Bunting cried out: "The appointment of Jabez Bunting as President, for instance." Mr. Bromley resumed: "That was not done in the usual way. I am prepared to submit to the enactments of this body; or, when that is against my conscience, I will retire from its ranks. I have done wrong, in future I will endeavour to do better." He repeated the promise in appropriate and suitable language.

Mr. Bunting: "As to Mr. Bromley's entertaining Dr. Warren, there are other rights besides the rights of hospitality; but I would rather laugh him out of it."

Mr. Bromley: "If I am required to say that my expulsion from the District Meeting was just and kind and called for, I cannot do it. If that be the condition of my continuing, I must retire."

Mr. Newton remarked that Mr. B. was required to leave the District Meeting because Mr. Stead had talked and whispered to him.

Mr. Bunting thought that the being whispered to by a brother was scarcely a sufficient reason for excluding a man from a meeting.

Mr. Burdsall deplored the grievous mischief done to the Methodism of his native city York, but pleaded that Mr. Bromley's full acknowledgment of his wrongdoing, especially his confession and his acknowledgment of his vanity, should be accepted by the Conference.

Mr. W. M. Bunting took the same view. He would spare him, not on account of his ability but his eccentricity, and pronounced the preface to his volume of sermons one of the worst specimens of egotism he had read.

Mr. Gaulter said : " If Methodism is ever destroyed, it will be from within.

Dr. Beaumont and others also pleaded strongly for the most lenient treatment possible of Mr. Bromley. Some excellent resolutions on the case were drawn up and proposed. This occupied a considerable time. The resolutions were carried with but one dissentient, Samuel Dunn, and were read to Mr. Bromley, whose request was complied with that they might be read a second time.

Mr. Bromley then said : " After the decision of the Conference I have no objection to give my fullest consent to the latter clause, and with Mr. Bunting's explanations, I give my entire pledge to what is required."

The President then gave to Mr. Bromley some suitable advice.

Mr. Bromley : " In reference to an obnoxious Association, I have some personal respect for individual officers, but I will hold no intercourse. Whatever the Conference ordains I will to the best of my ability maintain. When I cannot I will honourably retire." He expressed his obligation to the President in so suitable a manner that—

Mr. Bunting said : " I propose that it be entered on the Journal that Mr. Bromley has given entire satisfaction." (Agreed.)

A most satisfactory *finale* this to what had degenerated into an undignified and painful altercation. It proved that the egotism of Mr. Bromley had not seeded into the fanatical distension of your genuine demagogue. The latter knows full well that he must pose before his following as a sort of heaven-sent Mahdi, and therefore cannot possibly afford to undecree his own infallibility, but is obliged to outface the most staring facts rather than admit that he has blundered blamably. It is also to be noted that the Missionary Committee of sixty odd years ago would not allow its honour and judiciousness to be *wantonly* and *waywardly* reflected on, and that the Conference nobly supported them in that resolve.

Several others were called in question for having seemed to show sympathy, or at least lukewarm antipathy, to the malcontents' demands. It is necessary to explain that throughout this Conference Mr. Bunting had been its acting and most active Secretary. Mr. Newton, on his re-election to that office, confessed to Conference that even his so powerful frame had been shaken by the excitement and anxieties of the preceding year, that he was under medical law to abstain from all public speaking for a considerable time ; he must therefore ask the Conference to permit some one of its members to discharge his vocal functions. He was assured that he might make his choice. On what young man will this opportunity of showing forth his capabilities be graciously bestowed? Crowther? Prest? Bedford? West? George Osborn? All were under Mr. Newton's eye in

Manchester and Stockport. But on none of these did he cast his patronising glance. He startled Conference, if not the honoured individual himself, by promoting to that office one Jabez Bunting, whom no one else would have then thought of for such a secondary dignity.

This, however, gave to the leading spirit of the Conference another coign of vantage, especially under the question : *Are there any objections against any of the brethren ?* as they are examined one by one ; for was it not his part to read the names ? and no one in that body could read like Jabez Bunting. Besides, he could cut short an inconvenient speech by calling out the next name. The first name after Samuel Warren, in the regular course of business, at which a pause was made was that of Jonathan Barker, a supernumerary in Manchester, worn down by four-and-forty years of earnest and successful service. Mr. Newton, his Superintendent, complained of his not having cordially acted with his District in opposing Dr. Warren. He replied : "There is not a man more attached to Conference than I, and I am of an old Methodist family." (He might have added, more useful and devoted.) "The only thing that can be brought against me is that I have restrained myself from the vehemence of language which some others have employed."

Mr. Bunting : "You should tell the world of your disapproval of the Association and of its wickedness."

Richard Tabraham was charged with having restored Leaders who had been excluded by his predecessor. His defence was that they had been illegally expelled, without trial by the Leaders' Meeting.

Luke Barlow, Superintendent of the Burnley Circuit, was interrogated as to why he had not signed the Declaration. But this question was not entertained by the Conference, though Mr. Bunting thought "that we might ask the question."

Matthew Lumb had been for several years one of Wesley's preachers, and since that had been one of the nine members of the Managing Committee of Methodist Missions, and had fought through the heroic age of the West Indian Mission, having suffered many "trials of cruel mockings . . . yea, moreover, of bonds and imprisonments." He was now in the fifty-third year of his ministry, and had settled as a supernumerary in the Leeds Brunswick Circuit, but was still, as I can testify, an animated, earnest preacher. He was charged with having published a letter, written by him to Mr. Bunting during the Leeds organ troubles, recommending milder measures ; but this

letter Mr. Bunting had not acknowledged during the six intervening years, so its venerable writer had thought it might receive some public attention in the present troubles. It was pronounced "mischievous" by the minister who brought the charge.

Mr. Bunting: "I remember a foolish letter about the Leeds business, but I took no notice."

Mr. Entwisle moved for a committee on the case, but none was appointed. So the veteran missionary was left in peace.

Zechariah Taft was charged with having attended one of Dr. Warren's agitating meetings.

Mr. Bunting asked whether he approved of "the polity and constitution of Methodism."

Mr. Taft answered that he cordially approved of the Methodism to which he had been admitted and to which he had then pledged himself, but there were a few things in what was now called Methodism of which he could not approve. These he instanced, beginning with the expulsion of members and Leaders without the fair trial guaranteed to them by Conference law. "This," said he, "could not have been done when I entered this Body."

Robert Melson stoutly defended Mr. Taft's position, ending with a protestation of "unabated love to the Methodism to which I was pledged at the beginning."

Mr. Bunting: "What he loves is Melsonism, not Methodism."

Three ministers were detailed to converse with Messrs. Taft and Melson, but nothing came of it.

The second preacher in the Dudley Circuit was charged with having announced from the pulpit one of Dr. Warren's agitating meetings, and with having obstructed instead of helping his Superintendent in enforcing discipline.

Mr. Bunting said: "A Superintendent who does not consult his colleagues is a Turk and a tyrant, but 'a helper' who *will not help* his Superintendent in his care for Methodism is unworthy of it. I have long known and loved Mr. —, and love him still; but as Mr. Bromley has done himself the honour of submitting to the censure of the Conference, so must Mr. —."

The case occupied the attention of Conference a considerable time, and the offender's self-defence struck Mr. Fowler as "very flippant." He was censured from the Chair, and required to give pledges.

A Superintendent was charged with having allowed improper resolutions to be put at a meeting, and with having ruled that the expulsion of a member was in the hands of the Leaders.

Mr. Bunting: "I think Mr. — should plead incompetence, and beg never to be appointed as a Superintendent again. He 'makes a desert, and he calls it *peace*.'"

Mr. — handed up in self-defence a copy of the Rules of 1797, printed at the Book Room.

It was decided that the President should inform him that he had not been sufficiently firm.

The President stated that he had received a letter from "three gentlemen delegates, who in presenting it to him behaved in a most gentlemanly, bland, and civil manner." It was read. It dwelt upon "the serious state of the Methodist Societies." "We speak not in anger, but in sorrow." They requested to be allowed to "speak to the Conference, either by admission or in some other way, and are 'ready to state what we think necessary for the peace of the Societies.'"

Mr. Bunting: "There is also a body of delegates from the London Trustees. I propose a committee to determine what answer shall be given to these notes." A committee was appointed: Taylor, Treffry, Entwisle, James Wood, T. Jackson, etc.

Mr. Bunting read a second letter from the delegates, and warned the Conference against yielding to "ungodly pressure from without." "They have printed and circulated their appeal. I think the London preachers have greatly erred in not calling the dissatisfied together. We can beat them hollow in argument."

Mr. Gaulter said: "We want a bridge between us and them." It was agreed that the Superintendents of circuits should converse with their discontented people.

Mr. Fowler notes: "Mr. Bunting's speech was more liberal than those of several others. He defended the action of the English people in the Revolution of 1688, and added, '*The sacred right of insurrection*' is a 'true thing.' A state of things is possible in Methodism itself in which the people would not only have the right to resist the Conference, but would be *bound* to do so—e.g. if the Conference should ever prove unfaithful to its trust as the custodian of our doctrines." A committee of distinguished ministers, including Atherton, was appointed to confer with the trustees and delegates.

Mr. Bunting was requested by the President to give his views on the changes proposed by Mr. Bunting to the meetings of ministers and laymen which had been convened in Sheffield for that purpose five days before the Conference.

This quasi-constituent assembly consisted of the committees of the Missionary and Auxiliary Societies, with the addition of some other selected and invited laymen, who raised the number to about eighty.

Mr. Bunting: "I have great reluctance to be prominent in this matter. I do not wish to be in battles more than others. I have an objection to be considered as a moderator between the Conference and the people. I am greatly offended at the representation in the *Watchman*. It talks of concessions!

I came to Conference in great fear—not terror. I did not know whether I must retire into retirement: I told the gentlemen that we must not do anything to court popularity. Questions of Church Government are very knotty. Much may be said by ingenious men on both sides. My opinion is that the Lord Jesus has left His Church very much at liberty but He has laid down principles. I do not blame a man for being an Episcopalian. My opinion is that the plan of Presbyterianism is the nearest to the New Testament at first, but it was found to need some form of Episcopacy. There is (1) the rule of *Purity*—purity of *doctrine* and of *character*. (2) The rule of *Peace*. Whatever would turn our Conference or other meetings into mock or miniature Houses of Parliament is wrong. Talent may be brought into play and operation, but such displays as are made at parish meetings are very injurious. (3) The Rule of *Order*. Ministers must not be put out of the Chair of Church courts. People must not speak their mind under a pretence of plainness. It is not always right for a man to speak his mind. Never unless it be a good mind. (4) *Fidelity*. Methodism is the work of God, through the instrumentality of Mr. Wesley. Some great and essential points he has tied us up to. These are not to be changed by mere majorities, either in or out of Conference. Methodism has all the checks and securities which the voluntary principle affords, with all the unity and stability of establishment and endowment."

Mr. Bunting followed up these weighty observations by pronouncing a funeral oration over "lay-delegation." He said, "Lay-delegation is dead and buried." This was simply a strong and, as he found it, a telling way of expressing his own wishes on the subject. His optative mood resolved itself into the *indicative* or the categorical *imperative*; as some men now express their wishes in the tone and terms of infallible prediction. He then tried hard to show that the changes that had been made at his own instance and by his own initiative were quite in accordance with the principles of Wesley's own arrangements and provisions. But his reasoning proved too much. For example, he contended that his own proposal that men who had travelled fourteen years should be eligible for election into the Legal Conference, was but a carrying out of Wesley's principle. When there were but two hundred ministers he had made one hundred constitute the Conference; and widening the range of election and electors was, he urged, but an application of the same principle to the greatly increased number of ministers. As to what he justly called "clandestine expulsions," he attributed them to rash and inexperienced Superintendents. But alas! the rashest Superintendents were not always the most inexperienced ones. The custom which had prevailed immemorially in some societies—Bristol, for example—of reading to the Leaders' Meetings the names of newly admitted members, he pronounced to be "too great a concession to democracy."



He proceeded : " As the rules now stand, it would seem that no person can be put out of the society without a trial. But it is not the rule nor the practice. The rule does not say that the charge shall be proved to the satisfaction of the Leaders' Meeting. But it ought to be so interpreted. But the preacher must pronounce sentence, otherwise the rule of purity cannot be maintained. The talk about mercy and all such is the artillery of rebels against truth. The leaders cannot naturally care for the flock. They have no special call of God for such work. We have too much put our Pastoral Office into commission. But I would have some guard. Some Superintendents are young and unexperienced. I would retain the power but make it as palatable as possible. We have always had rash men. They have all gone now, it is to be hoped, but they may come in again—men who ride on the neck of office and bully the people and District and Conference."

"There should be a facile and regular access to Conference, The rule of 1797 provides for this. My opinion is that if some of the preachers had called the disaffected together, as their pastors who had the authority to do so, it would have been better. I think a representation of the leaders and local preachers, not by election, should be called between June and the Conference, limited in its object, not allowed to oppose the Constitution, as a memorial meeting. Do not be afraid of having gentlemen associated with us in money matters, but not by election."

One of the most important reforms agreed upon was an emendation of the law of the Special District Meeting, allowing the *Circuit* to choose half the additional ministers, instead of the Superintendent choosing all. This had the additional advantage of removing the temptation to tamper with the legal composition of the meeting, as had been done at Leeds, by rendering unnecessary a restriction in the range of choice.

The great fault of these concessions, as Dr. George Smith points out, was that they were "too late and too limited." Had they been made *earlier*, much mischief might have been prevented in the past; if *larger*, much loss and friction would have been precluded in the future.

A committee was appointed to prepare resolutions on what Mr. Bunting had said.

Mr. Bunting gave it as his opinion that Mr. Aitken's proceedings would end in a division. This came to pass in Liverpool, Spitalfields, and Lambeth.

A painful and unseemly collision took place between the Secretary of the Conference and his assistant, the only one, I think, that ever came to pass between the chieftains—Newton and Bunting. It occurred on this wise. By a most untoward coincidence, at the Conference after the Warrenite secession in Manchester, the three years' terms of six of the most

powerful pulpit-men, and most capable administrators in the body, came to an end—Newton, Grindrod, Anderson, Squance, Hollingworth, and Bedford. After such a concurrent depletion of members and of distinguished ministers, poor Manchester might well request the most restorative and healing ministerial appointment that could well be found. But the appointment made by the Stationing Committee was comparatively tame and unattractive. With a high level of respectability, it contained but two fresh men of mark—Robert Wood, and a young man in the second year of his probation, F. J. Jobson. Both these were in the Grosvenor Street Circuit, which then included Oxford Road. Instead of Grindrod, Harrison Walker; instead of Squance, then a giant in his impetuous eloquence, William Wears; and instead of the overpowering Hollingworth, the correct and gentlemanly Calder. The Manchester Stewards lost no time in coaching it to Sheffield, and during the second reading of the stations the Secretary, as the Manchester Chairman and representative, gave notice of some changes that must be made in Manchester. Thereupon the Secretary's assistant (not the *Assistant Secretary*, but a much more extemporised and ephemeral functionary), Mr. Bunting, resisted any attempt at changes. He declared: "The appointments cannot be mended. We must tell the people that the stationing rests with us." The majestic Secretary collapsed before this shaking of his armour-bearer's spear, and the latter hastened on to Stockport. But "the Manchester men" were not so easily silenced, even by the dictum of their redoubted fellow-townsmen. So Mr. Newton must needs return to the charge. To avoid another open contest with his principal, the Secretary's assistant had left him for a little space to do his own work. But the Oldham Street Steward had fixed on Peter McOwan, who was down for London (City Road), so Achilles soon returned to camp and council and plunged at once into the fray.

Mr. Bunting: "We must not submit to this sort of intimidatory delegation." Someone said the City Road appointment would have a sufficient number of competent men if Mr. Nelson or Edward Walker went there and Mr. McOwan came to Manchester.

Mr. Bunting: "Who are your competent preachers on the London Circuit? Is it John Bowers or William Bunting? They are not the men to raise the circuit. They want such a man as Peter McOwan. John Bowers and William Bunting can do a certain sort of work better than some others. Having said an evil thing, I may say a good one without

complaint. A few years ago Mr. Dixon was objected to by the Wakefield Circuit, and now we have more petitions for his appointment to circuits than for twenty of us besides. After a while Mr. Nelson" (who was down for the wrecked Oldham Street) "and Mr. Walker may have as many." A very long and spirited conversation took place upon the question. But Mr. Bunting's voice prevailed, and the City Road was allotted Joseph Taylor, William Toase, John Bowers, Peter McOwan, and William L. Thornton, with an equal number of "unattached" ministers resident within the circuit, who had such names as Jabez Bunting (now D.D.), Thomas Jackson, Dr. Beecham, Dr. Alder, Joseph Entwisle, and Dr. Hannah, all available for the Sunday services in its attractive chapels.

Meanwhile the shattered Oldham Street was left to pull itself together as it might by the aid of three right loveable and worthy men, whose reputation, never brilliant, was chiefly yet to make.

Mr. Galland very generously and justly moved the vote of thanks to Mr. Bunting for his services as President of the Institution; and Mr. Bunting, in reply, announced his judgment that London was not the most proper place for young men in training for the ministry. He proposed that all but the first year of studentship should count as probation.

The Auxiliary Fund was so heavily in debt that Mr. Bunting "felt some difficulty in admitting laymen on the committee until it should be cleared." Poor Jonathan Barker, who had held by the election of his brethren the honourable office of Treasurer of the Auxiliary Fund (now held by ex-President Walford Green) had borne the burden and heat of the debt without any lay colleague. But after the setting down he had received from the Secretary's assistant, he felt that it should be transferred to unwhipped shoulders.

The committee on William Griffith's case recommended that his name should be replaced on the Minutes as having travelled three years.

Mr. Bunting: "It is of importance that we should know whether he will render the required submission to his Superintendent." The President said that such inquiry would be necessary before his admission into full Connexion. He complained that four hundred persons had been applied to, to subscribe to a presentation of plate to Mr. Griffith "as a testimonial of their approval."

Mr. Bunting, on reading the name of Daniel Chapman, said: "Mr. Chapman should have some fitting counsel as to the voluminous works which he is about to publish. Mr. Bromley ought to complain of the loss of time to the Nottingham Circuit."

Mr. Bunting was requested to join the committee appointed to meet the delegates of the London Trustees, who, Mr. Taylor explained, "had nothing

to do with the association." But Mr. Bunting objected, saying: "I hope we shall never again suffer ourselves to be intimidated." The address to the delegates of the association, prepared by the committee, was then read—a *most admirable production*. The ex-President said that he had received sixteen letters of remonstrance against the suspension of Dr. Warren; and the President stated that he had received similar letters from Rochdale, Lynn, Daventry, Blackburn, Bury, Clitheroe, Darlington, Burslem, and Todmorden.

Thanks were voted to the Town Council of Edinburgh, which had voted £3,000 towards the debt on our chapel in that city.

Mr. Bunting remarked: "I think if Methodism in Scotland were put up to auction, it would be the best thing that could be done with it, except Glasgow, Edinburgh, Dundee, Perth, and perhaps Ayr. We have spent more money in Scotland than we can account for to God, or to our people."

Mr. Bunting again opposed the codification of our laws, either after the manner of the *Code of Justinian*, or the *Code Napoleon*.

Mr. Bunting insisted that if Mr. Lord, the representative, bore a letter with him to the American Conference, it must contain some explicit but very carefully worded protest against slavery. He said: "It must be drawn up by someone with a cool head."

Messrs. Dixon and Isaac Keeling were appointed for this service.

This Conference was, as might be expected, unusually long. Towards the close of the morning session on the third Saturday Mr. Fowler dropped his pen in utter weariness, after recording—"The unexampled prolixity of the last three days has given me a distaste for any more of the like kind."

Nevertheless, he reports some rich things which were said whilst Mr. Bromley alluded to some differences of opinion between members of the Conference, and to lively discussions between himself and Mr. Bunting.

Mr. Bunting: "If there are differences of principle amongst us I know nothing about it, and, unfortunately, I have always happened to be out when those lively discussions have come off between Mr. Bunting and Mr. Bromley."

Mr. Bunting, however, happened to be in during one of these discussions. He had been delivering a homily on the necessity of tractability on the part of young ministers, and used the name of Joseph Beaumont to point his moral thereupon.

Mr. Bromley said: "I do not approve of innuendoes circulated from the platform. Either there is a case against Brother Beaumont, or there is not. If there is, bring it forward; if not, insinuation ought to be silent; and I think that Mr. Bunting is a master of Methodist matters in general, but he errs in insinuating an implied charge after mentioning a brother's name."

Mr. Bunting: "I mentioned the name as a matter of history, not as an

accusation. Friends on the opposite side must not monopolise freedom of talk. I mean to have a little of it. I have myself been subject to 'friendly inquiry' for about six days. I am glad to be the subject of such inquiry, because I think it useful, and might be resorted to without being pronounced accusation."

Two things are to be noted in this speech: (1) The recognising two sides in the Conference—the side to which he himself belongs and the opposite side; (2) the only inquiry which had occupied nearly six days was the Leeds case. To this, therefore, he must have referred when he said, "I have myself been subject to friendly inquiry for six days." Here, then, he distinctly authenticates the public judgment and his son's pronouncement that the policy adopted in that case was fundamentally and essentially his *own*, so that to subject it to inquiry was to subject *himself* to inquiry. It must be seen at once that the principle here laid down by Mr. Bunting is a complete explosion of the redoubt behind which he entrenched himself on the occasion he refers to, when "he at once declared that he should not notice any strictures on his conduct" unless a *charge* against him was submitted in *writing*. (Vol. iii., p. 131, Smith's "Methodism.")

In the obituary of a very popular young Irishman who had died in the English work, Mr. Stephens said, "He was brought to a premature grave by loud and long preaching."

Dr. Bunting: "Mr. Stephens's advice is so rarely necessary that it should have been given in private."

Mr. Moore: "Mr. Wesley said of a preacher, 'He speaks correctly, but as if he was afraid that he might wake somebody.' Mr. Wesley was willing to trust to anyone, but would give the quiet preacher a hint, so he told him a story about a man who appeared before a magistrate, and spoke so calmly that the justice said he did not believe it. The man exclaimed, 'What! is there no such thing as justice in England?' 'Oh!' said the magistrate, 'I think there must be something in it.' Mr. Wesley never found fault with a preacher who preached as if he were half mad with zeal."

The President: "A Welsh scholar told me, 'Your preachers speak the best Welsh of any speakers.'"

Dr. Bunting, in pleading for a brother, said: "It is a bad precedent, but it is a bad case."

The Conference hit upon a way of meeting a bad case without making a bad precedent. They there and then subscribed £100.

#### BIRMINGHAM CONFERENCE OF 1836.

The Warrenite disturbance vastly strengthened the position and the influence of the great man against whom it was directed, and thus effected a purpose directly contrary to that which it

contemplated. The outrageousness of the measures adopted by the malcontents, and their utter discomfiture on their own chosen battlefield—the highest court of Equity—had evoked a strong reaction in favour of authority and order. The name of Jabez Bunting thus became a symbol and a synonym for the stability, security, and continuity which Englishmen desire. Hence, at the Conference of 1836, he was again voted into the chair. Mr. Stanley was once more the second on the list. No one else had more than one or two votes.

Beecham, Galland, and William Shaw were elected into the Hundred, a right worthy trio.

The President said: "It would be unpardonable to interrupt business above a moment or two, but I must be permitted to say that I am unable to give expression to my thanks for the vote which has placed me in the most honourable of all earthly situations. I hope I may say that by this vote you, whose opinion I most value, acquit me of the calumnious imputations cast upon me." In presenting the vote of thanks to the retiring President, he alluded to Mr. Reece's apostolic addresses and his sure pilotage through the tempest.

Mr. Atherton: "I think something should be done by way of resolution to perpetuate our sense of obligation to the Secretary's Assistant" (Dr. Bunting) "for drawing up three documents. Let the world see to whose head and heart and hands we are indebted for them."

The President suggested "that it would be well for himself to have a committee of advice or *sympathy*, in these times especially."

The students who had behaved well for two years were allowed the *first* year as well as the second one of their probation.

A candidate from South Wales named Hughes was warranted to be "of Methodistical habits."

The President: "One old *Methodistical habit* was to repeat the Lord's Prayer after one's own. I wish it was revived." A question having arisen as to the precise duties of a Quarterly Meeting in reference to candidates for the ministry,

The President said: "The Quarterly Meeting is not required to recommend a young man; it is asked whether it has any objection."

A great addition to the interest of this Conference arose from the presence of Dr. Fisk, the representative of the American Conference. He was one of the most graceful, charming speakers that I ever heard. He bore upon his face and style the unchallengeable impress of a scholar and a gentleman. He said: "We Americans look on you as our fathers and exemplars. Our standard of faith is the same as yours. We hold to the doctrines taught by Mr. Wesley. Methodism has been, and still is, the great check upon Socinianism on the one hand, and Calvinism on the

other. The Methodist Church system is the most effective of all evangelistic appliances. I cannot help advocating the Missions in the Western Country, supposed to reach 3,000 miles into the wilderness, founded by two young men born in Canada, who with their guns killed buffaloes and ate them without bread or salt. You have the advantage over us in the selection of your ministers. Your list of reserve is a list of men ; ours is a list of places. We are frequently obliged to admit incompetent men. If you can, spare some men not quite eligible for your work." Dr. Fisk then explained the great educational schemes of the Methodist Episcopal Church, of which he was the principal advocate and director. There had been a decline in the Church of late years, which he could only account for by political excitement most injurious to religious character. "I met a Presbyterian in England who said 'party politics had injured the Independents,' but who eulogised the Methodists for their wise abstention from mixing with politics. I congratulate you on your neutrality." He boldly touched on slavery :

"I think slavery only evil continually. We have no pro-slavery party in the American Conference. There may be individuals ; but you must not blame the body for that. There is some difference as to the best mode of getting rid of slavery. You may be better judges of abstract principles than we are ; but there are present difficulties. We need not your censures ; we have them wholesale. I am asked why we don't pass a law to put down slavery. I might as well ask why *you* don't pass a law to put down slavery in South America. We can do nothing but by *moral* means. The progress of emancipation is being accelerated. Since our independence six States have emancipated. There is a slow but safe advancement of emancipatory principles. Your slavery was at a distance ; ours is mixed up with our fellow-citizens. Your Parliament has an authority over your colonies, which our Congress has not over individual States. The more you chafe people who are not in your power, the more you distance the day of emancipation. You have treated me like a brother : I expected to be met with a rod or a club at every point." He then read enactments of the Methodist Church in America which evidently showed that it disapproves of slavery. He addressed the Conference in a very interesting style ; his manner is very unobtrusive, and his language very plain and perspicuous.

Mr. Lord said : "Some of the Abolitionists have acted very injudiciously, particularly in forming themselves into a *Wesleyan* Anti-slavery Society—an

infracton of the Connexional principle." Mr. Galland : " Has not some alteration been made touching slavery in the book of *Discipline* ?" Mr. Lord : " Yes : but the original words have been restored."

The President : " In the West Indies no one was put out for holding slaves." Dr. Fisk : " There has been no alteration in principle in the Book of Discipline." Allusion was made to something George Thompson had said. Dr. Fisk : " I am not here to reply to Mr. Thompson."

A plan was proposed for employing Scripture Readers in Ireland. Mr. Bromley : " I feel an objection to such a novelty. I think it is not God's way. I doubt whether we have a warrant to create a new class of men not expounders nor preachers. I feel an objection to give the sanction of Conference to anything not recognised in the Bible." Mr. Grindrod : " I recommend Mr. Bromley to consult the very next chapter to that which sanctions Sunday School Teachers, etc."

The President : " I somewhat sympathise with Mr. Bromley, but do not carry the principle quite so high."

The Schools Fund discussion was unusually lively.

Mr. Bunting : " I would have the Eton grammar continued in the schools as it is used in other schools."

Mr. Burgess advocated Valpy's. Mr. Hannah was for Eton. Mr. A. E. Farrar moved : " That the same grammars be used at both schools." Mr. Burgess moved : " That this be left to the discretion of the masters." So the matter dropped.

To an old Grove boy these details are of no small interest. We Grove boys lost a full year of classical reading through being detained so long over the cumbrous Eton grammars. Hence the Kingswood boys were always ahead of us in that important matter. Happily for the next generation, the Grove system was, on this point, assimilated to that of Kingswood.

Some Hull ladies had raised £200 for the Schools Fund by a bazaar. Mr. Bromley " objected to bazaars for such purposes."

The President : " I rank myself with Mr. Bromley. I think it goes too much upon the principle that the Schools Fund is a charity. I have a strong objection to appealing to the *charity* of our people. We ought to appeal to their *justice*."

The irrepressible James Bromley sent a letter to the Conference which he insisted on being read when his name came up under the question : *Are there any objections?* etc. It simply expressed his disapproval of something in a foregoing Conference. The President ruled it out of place under this heading.

It was proposed, however, that a letter should be written to him, inquiring why he wished his demur to a regulation of Conference to come under the question of *character*. The President : " I would ask a question, but would not press for an answer." Mr. Pilter, Mr. Bromley's Superintendent, gave a diverting rehearsal of a conversation he had held with him on the subject. The President said : " We must look at the matter with calmness and sobriety."



Mr. Bromley does not object to our discipline, but has a peculiar way of objecting to particular rules. We cannot bring a man to trial for this as for a serious offence." It was agreed to refer him to his Superintendent.

A. W. was brought up for having expelled a man without trial. He admitted the fact, but pleaded ignorance of the rule against it.

The President: "A preacher may withhold a ticket until inquiry is made or trial had, but no man can be expelled without trial."

Mr. W.: "If a minister may not expel a member without trial, I have been acting wrong all my ministerial life." An allegation which was believed by all who knew him.

The President: "I think it dishonest to put such a construction upon the law as Mr. W. has done. We must not quibble about a rule and thus set a bad example. Mr. W. should remember that a document so historical must be taken as a whole. The man in question has not excluded himself. We must execute our Rules in a spirit of kindness or we cannot defend our conduct. Brother W. is quite wrong. I am alarmed at the spirit of discontent. There is an attempt by some ministers to resume practically what we have given up. On the whole, Mr. W. has acted firmly. He may have been driven beyond port by stress of weather."

Mr. W. was instructed to let the man have a trial if he desired it.

The examination of "the candidates for ordination" as to doctrine was thorough and most interesting. It was conducted by the President himself.

He said: "I have spent *nine hours with these young men in private, inquiring into their religious experience, and am thoroughly satisfied.*" In the course of the theological examination in Conference, Mr. Melson observed upon the great importance of "insisting with the like emphasis on the divinity and the humanity of Christ."

The President made some invaluable observations on the imputation of Adam's guilt to his posterity, which were so strikingly Fletcherian as to make one wonder how he had conceived such a low opinion of Fletcher as a theologian. He showed that there could not be an imputation of Christ's righteousness without an imputation of Adam's guilt; but, unfortunately, he had not time to show that there could have been no imputation of Adam's guilt without the predetermined corresponding imputation of the righteousness of Christ.

Some candidates quoted the passage: "Godly sorrow worketh repentance." The President observed on the inappropriateness of the quotation as applied to the penitence which comes before justification by faith. He insisted that the passage refers to "a case of ecclesiastical discipline," and that as God "justifieth the ungodly," no sorrow before justification can be called "godly sorrow." He alluded to "Mr. Scott's (of Hull) attack on Wesley, and

thought it ought to be noticed in the Magazine." The President maintained that "the penitent is considered under the wrath of God until he believes." Mr. Grindrod: "Repentance does not abate the *judicial displeasure* of God."

Dr. Fisk, who took an animated part in the "conversation," introduced the subject of the witness of the Spirit. Next came the doctrine of *Christian perfection*. Mr. Treffry attributed the Calvinistic denial of that verity to the preposterous and unscriptural tenet that "the body is the seat of sin, and therefore the dissolution of the body is necessary to the extermination of sin."

When the doctrine of Baptism came on, a minister asked the judgment of the Conference on a brother's having refused to bury a child of Methodist parents because it was unbaptised. The President: "This is one of the follies which make good men ridiculous." The affair was, however, satisfactorily explained. This introduced the subject of the Baptismal Service for infants, which Mr. Atherton pronounced to be in some points at variance with our doctrinal standards.

The President: "There are many things in that form which nothing in the world could induce me to use." Mr. Dalby: "May we use the sign of the Cross in Baptism?" The President was indignant at the question, and ruled that "we should not allow such foolish questions to be proposed."

Nevertheless, this very "foolish thing" had been done by a very prominent minister.

The whole "conversation" was interesting and significant in a high degree. It reminds one of the "Minutes of Conversation" at the first five-and-thirty Conferences, in which doctrine was the very staple of deliberation. *The first question* ever proposed in a Methodist Conference was: "What to teach"; and the second was, "How to teach it." (*Minutes*, 1745.) At a later Conference Wesley clearly pointed out that the secret of the success of Methodism lay in these two vital fundamental facts: that God had taught the Methodist preachers —(1) *What to teach*, and (2) *how to teach it*; first, the matter of our teaching, then the manner. He showed how our whole organisation and finance had grown out of our doctrines first, and then out of the way in which they were proclaimed, with all the fire and urgency of a most vivid personal conviction and experience. He shows that the class-meeting was created by the preaching, and *necessitated* by the God-given unction and success of Methodist preaching. These wise master-builders of 1836 had sufficient insight into and interest in the glorious work in which they were engaged to see that

in order to preserve its solidity and symmetry it must be formed according to the line and rule of Wesleyan Methodist doctrine.

Hence, having secured our chapels to our doctrines, these wise-hearted ministers of the Word saw and felt the necessity of securing our doctrines to our chapels. They rightly felt that even had we lost our chapels, the power of our doctrines, preached with the genuine Methodist conviction and fidelity, would soon have built us more. But once let slip our Methodist doctrines, and we lose the identity and continuity, the homogeneousness and harmony of our doctrinal teaching, and we throw away our vital energy, and the very reason of our existence as a distinct Christian Church.

Two things, however, one can but wish for in reading this examination: A Greek Testament, placed beside the well-bound Minutes of the successive Conferences, and a scholar like Thomas Galland to take part in the delightful conversation. A reference to the "original Greek" would have cleared away all difficulties, and Thomas Galland was a master in Biblical theology. The observations he let fall during my own examination for the ministry have been of service to me throughout the more than fifty-seven years which have since elapsed. But Mr. Galland was away on his benevolent mission to comfort the poor Preacher who was crushed by his censure at the last Conference.

The number of members lost to the Connexion by expulsion or secession during Dr. Warren's agitation was, as nearly as could be ascertained, 7,800—about half as many more as were lost in the disruption under Mr. Kilham.

Samuel Dunn, who had not been received into full Connexion on the ground of his disbelief in the *Divine Sonship* of Christ, avowed his having arrived at a firm conviction of that Verity, through reading Wesley's *Works*. He was asked whether he would be ordained with the candidates *publicly*, or in the old form, henceforth to be disused, by simple vote of Conference. He preferred the public ordination by *imposition* of hands. His renunciation of his error caused "great joy among the brethren." Ordination by "laying on of hands of the presbytery," which Mr. Fowler had so earnestly advocated *at the foregoing Conference*, was, notwithstanding the strongly expressed misgivings of Mr. Grindrod, now cordially adopted, with but two dissentients, R. Melson and John Moulton.

An interesting discussion took place with regard to a Theological Institution for Canada. Messrs. Alder, Beecham, Marsden, Grindrod, and S. D. Waddy were appointed to prepare a reply to the proposal.

The Editor, Thomas Jackson, laid before the Conference the unavoidable alternative of a second Editor or his own retirement. Mr. John Brown had long been the Editor of *The Child's Magazine*, large sums being paid for articles by the most popular children's writers of the day, such as Mrs. Sherwood. An eminent minister was unanimously appointed as Mr. Jackson's colleague. A new periodical was proposed—*The Christian Miscellany*—for the special purpose of interesting our young people in favour of *Methodism*, and as subsidiary to our more solid and doctrinal adult magazine. Hence originated *The Christian Miscellany*.

A motion to extend the term of the Book Steward's appointment caused "a spirited debate" on the general question of departmental appointments, in which Mr. Fowler took part.

The President "thought Mr. Fowler's remarks too free," and indulged himself in some uncalled-for observations "rather full of asperity."

Mr. Gostick said: "I am firmly fixed in Methodist principles, but do not worship Presidents, but look at the platform as having on it fagging men."

Mr. Scott proposed the term of six years for all offices, "the lease to be renewable by Conference."

The President: "We are not afraid of the term *collective pastorate*, though it is objectionable to Radicals." The ordination question then cropped up.

Mr. Galland: "Mr. Wesley did not introduce the question of ordination by laying on of hands because it was not *good*, but because it was not *ripe*. It is now ripe: let us pluck it."

Mr. Powell (Apostolical Succession) thought it should have another year to ripen.

The President proceeded to catechise the Superintendent of the Frome Circuit, saying: "It is the only way to arrive at the facts. *I like old Methodism as it is.*"

Grantham having applied for an additional minister at the expense of the Connexion, the President remarked: "Let Grantham raise less for the Missions and more for the Circuit. I am indignant at brethren boasting of what they do for the Missions, and coming here to beg for their Circuits in the spirit of pauperism. We have no increase of members to justify an increase of ministers."

The President also commented on the fact that Dr. Coke, the great missionary advocate, had left such a large sum for the sustentation of the home work. For it was one of the many noblenesses of Jabez Bunting that he never pressed the financial claims of his own department beyond its due proportion.

Liverpool had been so wrecked by the Warrenite agitation that it was obliged to ask for an unmarried man instead of a married man.

A request was received from Mr. Gwyther, vicar of Yardley, to be allowed to take the Lord's Supper along with the Conference. The President gave the answer without putting it to Conference, saying : " We encourage free communion with other Churches."

The President : " On the Committee of Privileges we want *working* men in London, and men of *influence* in the country." Mr. Atherton had not introduced the propositions as to the Children's Fund into this Quarterly Meeting. Mr. Scott *had*, "as it *might* concern the friends in the Circuit." Mr. Taylor had "made it a *Circuit* matter, since, if Conference adopted it, the *Circuits* would have to bear the expense."

The President : "The error is here : to carry a good point, you have done wrong ; you cannot justify it, but must acknowledge it to be wrong. You have given to the Conference the origination of new rules, to the Quarterly Meetings a *veto* on serious alteration. I fear I shall trespass on the impartiality of a President by giving my opinions too freely, but I think you have acted with too much impetuosity. You have on hand, at once, the Children's Fund, the School Fund, and the Dawsonian Fund. I wish well to the Dawsonian Fund, but you have acted with far too much impetuosity."

Mr. Burdsall blamed the *Watchman* for the introduction of all these matters to the Quarterly Meetings. Mr. Pilster thought that Quarterly Meetings might be allowed to recommend that we should not let our children starve. Mr. Lord having informed the Conference that the burning of "the book concern" in New York involved a loss of 300,000 dollars, there and then made a collection on its behalf. Mr. Ryerson was also authorised to collect subscriptions for the *Institution* in Canada, the Canadian Conference having calculated upon raising in England at least £2,000. Mr. Farmer had engaged to advance them all the money they might want ; but the President thought that Conference was in honour and spirit, though not under pledge, bound to see that the interest was paid. He said that "a committee must be appointed, consisting of a few gentlemen, to *converse* on the subject." He deprecated any *discussion* on the subject, as it was a mere private arrangement to which we were bound in honour.

Thus was planted the vital germ of the great educational establishments of Canadian Methodism. It was simply christened "the Coburg Academy." Its Principal was appointed by the British Conference. The foundations were laid in troublous times—the days of the rebellion in Canada ; and one main reason of its starting was, as stated by the representative, "to prevent their young people from being trained in Republican principles."

The President suggested that "the Book Committee should be *instructed* to make a present of books to the Academy." He "thought that the *Institution* might counteract the effects of Popery."

A farewell letter from the venerable James Wood was ordered to be "printed in the magazine."

Under the head of *Missions*, the question of the *term* of the appointment of departmental officers came up again, and was freely discussed, and determined as it now exists. Mr. Dixon said: "The great point is to *get rid genteelly* of unsuitable men." Messrs. Keeling, Scott, Burdsall, Atherton, and Stanley urged the wisdom of keeping men of proved capability as long as possible. Mr. Galland: "I at first looked upon the question with fear, but have been led to think that the proposed arrangement is the best." Mr. Dunn objected.

The President: "It is of no use to visit Scotland." But it was decided that "the President should go to Scotland." He asked: "What am I to do there?" It was answered: "Take the chair." Mr. Reece said that Dr. Beaumont had "not permitted him to take the chair at Edinburgh." The President: "It is quite lawful and becoming to ask the President to take the chair, especially during some part of the business." Dr. Beaumont was not in the Conference at the time.

Large balances were due to the Treasurers of the Auxiliary and the Seniors' Funds. Mr. James Wood, of Manchester, had generously consented to become the first lay Treasurer of the former. The new ministerial Treasurer, after Mr. Barker's resignation, pleaded for a larger grant from the Book Room.

The President: "If we cannot do all the good we would, let us do all the good we can."

The President: "I think the Chapel Building Fund wants a little more talking about."

Mr. Allen: "We have lost half our chapels in the Shrewsbury Circuit, and have been obliged to build somewhat prematurely."

The President: "If you had *taken your stand in the street, chapelless*, you might have done more good."

On the reading of the obituary of Joseph Hollingworth, who had fallen at the age of fifty-five, after but twenty-eight years of ministry, Mr. Newton gave it as his conviction that he was the victim of the Manchester troubles.

This is my own conviction, too, for he was blessed with the powerful, fresh physique of a Derbyshire farmer, and was endowed to a high degree with the bodily, the mental, and the spiritual constituents of a mighty preacher of the Gospel. But such scenes and struggles strike deep into the vitals of a loving, tender-hearted minister of Christ.

As another sad relic of the disturbance of the preceding year, it was announced to the Conference that W. S—— had so laid to heart the reproof he had received at the last Conference for the slack rein which he had held as Superintendent, that he had become quite unfitted for his work. Kind-hearted Mr. Galland offered to go to Madeley, where Mr. S—— was then stationed, to ascertain his state of mind and body.

A highly interesting session was that in which the ladies were admitted to present medals to Mr. Reece and Mr. Ryerson. Mr. Edmund Heeley presented them, on behalf of the ladies. He said "His *intimidation* had been removed by the manner in which he was received."

The President addressed Mr. Reece in very appropriate terms, emphasising his great respect and affection for the Established Church.

On the third reading of the stations the President said: "If all the *Circuits must have young men*, there is nothing for it but to shoot the old ones."

Another interesting break in the proceedings was the reading of the letters of the counsel on our side in Dr. Warren's case, in acknowledgment of a present of Wesley's *Works*. Sir W. Horne said: "Notwithstanding his professional vocations, he found time to read religious books; and Wesley's *Works* would find an honoured place in his library." Rolfe said: "He had found it very difficult to make people understand our case."

The Conference received a somewhat admonitory communication. It will be remembered that Mr. Bunting had published a letter in opposition to the candidature of Lord John Russell to represent the family town of Bedford in the reformed Parliament, and that the Whigs and Methodists alike attributed to Methodist hostility his most mortifying defeat; and Robert Newton had made a political excursion into Devonshire to prevent the Methodists from voting for him in the other family borough of Tavistock. A deputation of the Methodists had waited on the Duke of Bedford and requested him, for these courtesies, to give them ground for a chapel. His Grace replied: "We have an account to settle with the Methodists."

On the reading of the letter which conveyed this information and solicited advice, Mr. Atherton said: "I think we should learn a lesson from this not to take a forward part in electioneering matters."

The President: "The Whigs seldom look at both sides. I never wrote a letter about the Devonshire election."

Inquiry was made as to some of the Circuits where secessions had occurred since the last Conference. London, City Road, had lost 150; Sunderland had lost 650; etc.

The President: "Putting a man *out of the society* is often the way of *putting him into honour*. Let us learn lessons from the past. Radicals in politics are inconsistent in joining Methodism."

The President: "The English Preachers never did concede the principle that a Preacher may not expel a member without trial. In some places Preachers sought the advice of the people, and kind lenity has given rise to the statement that they *could* not expel without it. Joseph Taylor said that 'he would never have discretion in the matter.' We must refrain from conciliation if it be abused."

A deputation of four distinguished ministers was appointed to visit Bramley, and meet the members who are dissatisfied. The trustees who have come forward in this emergency are to be respectfully addressed.

The Book Committee was authorised to present books for the Methodist University in America, and Coburg Academy in Canada, to the amount of not less than £100 each. Some objected to the paragraph on slavery in the reply to American address.

Dr. Fisk: "I wish the Conference would state in their address all that they intend; or I will faithfully represent your wishes. I would suggest that some notice should be taken of what the American Conference *has* done."

The President: "The leaven of abolition is in the meal, but it is not yet ready to be baked. I would assert great and eternal principles, now ripe." The paragraph was modified.

The President prepared a resolution restraining the "wandering brethren." A debate took place on the admission of members. Mr. Pilter advocated the reading of new names at the leaders' meeting, but no one else approved.

The President: "We must be cautious; much may be said on both sides. The question was much discussed in Kilhamitish times. Hanby unfortunately sanctioned the practice; but Benson, Mather, and others adhered to the Methodist and Scriptural plan."

Mr. Taylor: "Great caution is required in the admission of members. Expelled members easily find their way back again." Mr. Reece: "A member cannot find his way into the society without the consent of the preacher." Mr. Taylor: "I have a member in my Circuit whom the Conference says should not be in it." Mr. R. Wood: "I always inquire of a member, 'Have you been in the society before?'" Mr. Entwistle: "A change of class-books encourages improper introductions by a side door."

A *digest of Methodist law* was again requested by memorials, and again opposed by the President: "It is encompassed with insurmountable difficulties." *The Dawsonian Fund* was introduced. Mr. Atherton: "As they have begun without the Conference, they must go on without it." Mr. Scott: "I approve of Mr. Atherton's speech; but I would have the object accomplished." Mr. Bowers: "It would be a disgrace to us if it were not accomplished."

The President: "I approve of the great principle stated by Mr. Atherton. I have refrained from giving the fund further sanction than my subscription,



but if a wrong thing start we had better go with it. If we do not go with them, they will go without us."

The President's requested Committee of Advice and Sympathy was appointed, consisting of six London Superintendents and several country brethren.

The President expressed his thanks to the brethren and said: "If I have grieved any of the brethren, I humbly ask pardon."

A brisk debate ensued on the application of the Committee of the Sheffield Proprietary School for the appointment by the Conference of one of its members as Governor and Chaplain of that institution.

Mr. Grindrod: "I advised the chief projector of the scheme to wait till Mr. Bunting visited Sheffield; but he did not happen to come, and Church and Dissenters commenced Proprietary Schools, and our people were likely to connect themselves with one or the other. I do not justify our haste, but may be allowed to make an apology. Sheffield has some claims as to situation. Some might prefer London, but that has the Mission House and Theological Institution; Bristol has Kingswood; Manchester and Leeds have other duties. Sheffield is very healthful, and no other place is so thoroughly Wesleyan. If you do not appoint a governor, they will abandon the scheme. The committee must be members of the Methodist Society."

The President: "I wish to know if there is anything Connexional in the scheme." This was disowned.

The President: "I think there is something Connexional in the head of the promoters."

Mr. Grindrod: "There is no intention that it should be the only school."

Mr. Burdsall: "If there be many schools, many preachers will be abstracted from the work."

Mr. Reece: "It would be a good place for a man who cannot do the whole work of a Circuit."

Mr. Rogers: "It seems anomalous to have such an institution over which we can have no control."

Mr. Entwistle: "I approve of the project, but care should be taken with the details."

The President: "I think it may be proper for me to suggest the course of argument, which has been departed from. The question is not whether such a school is desirable, but whether you will appoint a Governor and a committee, and take the institution under your care, and are prepared to do the same for *six* other schools."

Mr. Waugh talked of Church and Quaker Schools, and approved of this.

Mr. Galland: "I think it a serious matter for Conference to pledge itself to a public school, with hints thrown out of others being established." (J. F. spoke).

Mr. S. Waddy: "We wish to have the sanction of the Conference and the appointment of a governor. A committee may be appointed to visit the place and determine the details. Our people complain that we provide for our own sons and will not provide for theirs. If refused, it will injure our funds. A man may be as useful in a school as in a Circuit."

The President: "You are asked to give a sanction to the whole system—not only to find someone to conduct family worship and take the boys to chapel, but to the plan of education. This is full of difficulties. It is a castle in the air, and will end in disappointment." He maintained that what was wanted was not a provincial or West Riding school but a central Connexional university, and we must "consult our people" about it, and secure their approbation.

Mr. Grindrod assured the Conference that if no Governor were appointed the Sheffield gentlemen would sell the land that they had bought. He contended that a number of schools of this kind might lead to a Connexional university.

Mr. Scott: "What we want is five or six such schools, from which our youths could be drafted into a central university."

Dr. Fisk showed how the American Methodist system of higher education had sprung out of schools of a lower grade, and that the American Conference had only an indirect connection with the opening and management of the Methodist collegiate establishments. The committees and the influences were entirely Methodist, and neither principal nor professor could be drawn from the ministry without the consent of his bishop.

J. F. spoke a second time.

The President drew up a resolution: "The Conference has heard with great pleasure and yet with great apprehension . . . and agrees to appoint as Governor a minister who either now is or may become a supernumerary." The President thus explained his own resolution: "It pledges us to nothing. He must become a supernumerary before he can take the situation."

This resolution was carried with but two dissentients—Grindrod and S. D. Waddy. Why they should object it is hard to see, inasmuch as the resolution *practically* conceded everything. The most able-bodied and the most able-minded minister in the whole Body was eligible for the situation, on the one condition that he should become a supernumerary, and that *only for the nonce*. For, as the President explained, "after a rest he may return to Circuit work."

It was announced that Mr. Fernley offered a prize of £100 for the best essay on the *Pastoral Office*, Messrs. Bunting, Grindrod, and Scott being the appointed judges.

Mr. Galland: "I think it would be better to have the examination at the Institution every six months instead of every three." Agreed.

The President: "When *principle is triumphant* we shall be able to give all our young men the advantage of the Institution."

Mr. Grindrod: "Can the young men on trial have the benefit of the visitation of the tutors, as proposed?"

The President: "That was only an elegant effusion of Mr. Lessey's mind. It is quite impracticable. We want a new edition of the *Christian Library* in a cheap form."

This was moved and carried.

The President: "The Districts are representatives of the Conference. It will be well to give the District power to *determine* the case of an organ. As it is, we are laughed at."

So much for the decision on the Leeds case!

The President said, on the obituary of David McNichol: "Dr. Clarke said, 'I am a fool compared with David McNichol.' I heard Mr. McNichol say he never was at school till after he became a Methodist, when he attended a night-school. What a man may accomplish by industry!"

One hundred and fourteen Circuits petitioned for allowances to the children of supernumeraries.

The President drew up five resolutions on the subject. A friend offered £150 towards the purchase of Mr. McNichol's library for the Institution.

The President: "In stationing, we should take off a little of our feeling for a man who is present, and put it to the man who is absent."

A letter of complaint was received from the Trustees of the Conference chapel.

Mr. Naylor: "The trustees question my right to nominate the men to represent them."

The President: "So do I. The case is different in reference to the appointment of stewards. Stewards are middlemen. You have no right to nominate a representative. You may consult and propose; and this is straining a point. Construe our laws liberally for the people. Avoid all debatable ground."

Oh, that this wise advice had been acted on in the Leeds case, and in all subsequent disputes!

The President added: "I have some difficulty as to what advice should be given. The Superintendent should speak to the trustees."

Mr. Marsden brought forward regulations relative to society meetings.

Mr. Leach: "Long preaching prevents the society meeting."

Mr. Newton: "I think the reason of their decline is that wrong subjects are chosen."

Mr. Entwistle: "I always prepare for my address to the society. Some preachers may preach long, but others imitate them because they think it makes them seem great."

The President: "Sing, pray, or preach, or do as you please; but *two hours in the morning and two hours in the evening*—we cannot feed our people with less. Many people cannot stay on the Sunday evening; the Sabbath afternoon or week night might be better."

The first Birmingham Conference marks an era in the constitutional history of Methodism, as being the first at which the lay element of a Connexional committee was supplied by representative election on its *present basis*. So early as 1819, indeed, the embarrassments of the Chapel Fund had obliged

the Conference to evoke Connexional sympathy and succour by elective representation on the pre-Conference committee of that fund, upon a much more popular principle than the present, but upon a more restricted scale and area. The Committee of *Distribution* for the Chapel Fund was reinforced by *fifteen trustees*, not ministers, elected by the Quarterly Meetings of Circuits in or near the town in which the Conference was held, those Circuits being named year by year in the Minutes of Conference. The principle of selection was not strictly that of contiguity, and it was sometimes not so easy to divine why one Circuit should be taken and the other left; as, for example, at the Sheffield Conference of 1835, why Belper should send a representative, while the nearer West Riding Circuits, Barnsley, Wakefield, and Huddersfield, were left out in the cold; why the far-away Newcastle should send its representative, yet York, with more members and but one intervening Circuit, should be without the franchise!

Up to the year 1835, the most time-honoured of all, the *Contingent*, originally the *General Fund*—a sort of casual ward where all claims were sent which had nowhere else to go—had been administered by ministers alone, the names of the Treasurers and Secretaries only being printed in the Minutes. But the in every way costly experience of that depleting year had taught the Conference the lesson that lay shoulders must be set to the clay-clogged wheels: although Dr. Bunting had, in expounding his proposed concessions, explicitly and emphatically declared that the lay members of Connexional committees must be chosen *not* by *election* of the laity but by selection of the Conference. When Mr. Scott proposed that a certain number of lay gentlemen should be *invited* to attend the committees of the School Fund, Dr. Bunting had declared that was the limit of his Liberalism.

But in the case of the Contingent Fund, it was found expedient to change the principle of representation from the Circuit to the *District*. Eleven of the twenty-eight Districts were to send representatives to this committee, chosen by the Circuit Stewards, out of their own number.

It is not easy to correlate the sage, paternal utterances of Dr. Bunting at this Conference with the extreme ecclesiastical positions taken up by *him* at the self-same conclave. But this will be more advantageously attempted in our closing general

survey of his conceptions of the polity of Wesleyan Methodism and the true policy of its administration.

#### LEEDS CONFERENCE OF 1837.

The Conference of 1837 was held in Leeds, under the Presidency of the Rev. Edmund Grindrod. Before Dr. Bunting left the chair, in the course of elections to the Legal Conference by seniority, Mr. Slugg and another minister were found to have an equal vote.

Dr. Bunting asked whether of the two would give way to the other. Mr. Slugg at once expressed his hearty readiness to concede the honour to his brother. "Then," said Dr. Bunting, "I give my casting vote to Mr. Slugg."

Before the vote of thanks to the retiring President was passed, Mr. Galland said that although he should heartily concur in the vote, he felt bound in conscience to make two exceptions. The first was the severe rebuke administered to Mr. Fowler from the chair at the last Conference for the frank and honourable statement of his views with regard to the question then before the Conference, with respect to practically permanent appointments to the Mission House and other Departments.

The President: "I would submit whether this is in order."

Dr. Bunting: "I would have him proceed, and be pardoned for disorder." Mr. Galland refused to commit even a pardonable disorder, but would proceed to express his total want of concurrence with what Dr. Bunting had done at a meeting in Exeter Hall in reference to Church rates. He then read an extract from *The Watchman*, but was called to order by the President. Dr. Beaumont: "I think Mr. Galland has a right to speak his honest, upright mind. He may be put *right*, but he must not be put *down*."

Dr. Bunting: "I will scorn to put any man right again. If my brethren will not defend me, I shall not defend myself." Mr. Lessey: "Mr. Galland should not have stated this on mere newspaper authority. I move the order of the day."

Mr. Galland: "I think there is not the freedom of debate there should be."

Mr. Atherton: "Mr. Galland has a right to speak. Some others of us thought there was asperity in Dr. Bunting's treatment of Mr. Fowler."

Mr. Scott: "In respect to the meeting at Exeter Hall, Dr. Bunting was mentioned because of his station. We must protect our officers."

Mr. Reece: "I am surprised that any man can say anything for a right to act contrary to a right feeling."

Mr. Galland: "I have no unkind or disrespectful feeling towards Dr. Bunting; but have frequently defended him."

Dr. Bunting: "Not more than I deserve. I have an objection to occupy the time of Conference. Mr. Galland knows that he owes to me his continuance in

our body. The men I have rendered most service, in my humble way, take opportunities to attack me."

Mr. Galland: "I have no wish to make any ostentatious claim on the ground of anything I may have said or done for Dr. Bunting, or for any brother. I am prepared to acknowledge my obligation to Dr. Bunting; but I do not know that I owe my continuance in the Body to Dr. Bunting."

Dr. Bunting: "I thought I had had some influence in keeping him in Methodism; and there is no other 'ism half so good for a man's soul."

Mr. Newton: "We all anticipated a peaceful Conference and a unanimous vote." The vote of thanks to the retiring President was passed without a division.

Dr. Bunting: "I feel thankful. Whatever defects there may have been in my administration, as it has been somewhat pompously called, I have not compromised the character of the Body. If I have gone to the meeting, I said nothing beyond the purpose of the meeting, or un-Wesleyan, or disrespectful to such men as Mr. Galland. Those who cannot go so far as I do have my full liberty to stop short. The gratification of such thanks is much taxed by the time occupied in defence."

Mr. Galland: "I wish to make some inquiry."

Dr. Bunting: "I have an inquiry to make about an incendiary letter."

Dr. Beaumont: "I think it unfair to call a letter incendiary before it is put in evidence; and thus make a prejudicial impression."

Dr. Bunting: "Such cavilling shall have no quarter from me; I thought it had subsided. This is miserable petty jealousy."

Dr. Beaumont: "I enter my protest against such epithets in the Wesleyan Methodist Conference." A straggling fire ensued. Thanks were voted to a number of officials.

Mr. Galland: "I think these offices do not circulate sufficiently."

Dr. Bunting: "I did not apply petty shuffling jealousy to Dr. Beaumont. But Mr. Galland I do think has revived petty jealousy. Places of honour ought not to be objects of ambition to a Methodist preacher. Men who wish to displace officers are seldom fit to occupy them."

When Conference reached the question, "Any objection against any of the brethren?" the first pause was made at no less a name than that of Jabez Bunting. But the questioner was no other than that strong man himself.

Dr. Bunting: "Has Mr. Lumb any objection against me?"

It will be remembered that Matthew Lumb, one of Wesley's preachers, and one of the heroes of the heroic times of our West Indian Missions, had been at a former Conference called in question as to a letter written to Dr. Bunting during the year of his second Presidency, to which, as the great man had taken not the slightest notice of it, the stout old minister had compelled attention by publishing it to the world. When the General Declaration of the Methodist Preachers, embodying a denial of a decisive influence of any person or party, was issued by the

London preachers he at first signed it, but, no doubt confronted by the inconsistency of the Declaration with his own published views, he had written to the issuers of that document and withdrawn his name. Hearing that the names of the signatories to the Declaration were to be printed in the Minutes of Conference, he had written more than one letter to the Conference, protesting against his name being appended to that document. To his surprise and annoyance, on reading the Minutes he found the name of Matthew Lumb attached to the Declaration contradictory of Matthew Lumb's published opinions. At this he was not only *riled* but was *twitted* as not having the courage of his convictions. Now the sturdy spirit who could smile at chains and dungeons and the threats of tar-and-feathering from men whom he knew would enjoy the fulfilling of the threat, could not endure the seeming to suppress his sentiments for fear of consequences. After long struggling, in a mood of irritation, Mr. Lumb wrote to the President, Dr. Bunting, complaining in unmeasured terms of the publication of his name against his earnest protest, and denouncing this arresting of letters as something like a crime against society. The President's keeping back a letter intended for the Conference had been distinctly forbidden by a special law of Conference on the occasion of the keeping back of Dr. Clarke's communications to his brethren. It was admitted that letters to the Conference signed Matthew Lumb had not been mentioned to the Conference.

Dr. Bunting said: "I do not know whether I shall muster courage to read the letter. It charges me with a passion for fame. I have no particular love of infamy."

Dr. Bunting read portions of the letter. With the exception of the printing of his name against his protest, and the arresting of his letters to the Conference, it consisted wholly of remarks he had heard made by others upon Dr. Bunting and his policy. But, judging from its effect upon the brethren, it must have been worded very rudely and most wildly, and have been a distressing contrast to his thrilling correspondence from the West Indies, which had for so many years stirred up the missionary flame in England. In fact, he evidently did not like the sound of it as reproduced by the elocution of one of the most masterly readers of his time. But the gravest matter it contained was this: It charged Dr. Bunting with having caused the loss of 1,040 members in Leeds.

Dr. Bunting finished thus : "I would rather have ten thousand accusations than these defences. Tell me who my accusers are, and I can defend myself."

The President : "Will you allow this attack upon the President and upon the system of Methodism?"

Dr. Bunting : "I ask that Mr. Lumb will prove these charges."

Mr. Lumb began his reply, but was by the President forbidden to revert to the past. Mr. Lumb : "I am sorry that I have written as I have done, but do not recant my views—I cannot."

Dr. Bunting : "I would ask Mr. Lumb whether he acquits me of all sinister motives and want of love for Methodism?" Mr. Lumb's reply to this appeal was forestalled by four successive speakers, who interposed their own views upon the question. Old Joseph Gostick, however, gave one of those humorous speeches which the Conference looked for as a breezy interlude. He finished thus : "When I entered Leeds I felt unutterably thankful to be in this tip-top of Methodism, and I did not dream that I was going to have this awful *Lumb-ago*." (Great laughter.)

When Mr. Lumb was permitted to reply to Dr. Bunting's question he entirely and most heartily acquitted him of all sinister motives and want of love to Methodism. "Dr. Bunting loves Methodism as much as I do. If I have said anything to hurt Dr. Bunting, I humbly ask his pardon. As to particular ways of carrying on Methodism, Dr. Bunting will hold his opinion and I will hold mine."

This explanation was pronounced not quite satisfactory. It was moved "That Mr. Lumb's letter is unchristian" (with other still more vehement expressions) "and requires an apology." Dr. Bunting pressed that Mr. Lumb should "take the letter and tear it, and perhaps the Conference would be satisfied." An eminent minister on the platform would have the addition : "and if Mr. Lumb refuse to tell the name of the person quoted in his letter and to make an apology, his name be dropped from the Minutes." Dr. Beaumont demurred to the resolution in the form proposed, and said that the charge implied in it should be more patent and explicit. Several ministers cried out that the crime was "manifest enough."

Mr. Reece : "I would have Mr. Lumb answer the question : *Who was the person that made Mr. Lumb's defence of Mr. Bunting necessary?* Who is the man that said these things?"

It is to be noted that Mr. Lumb in his letter brought no charges personally against Dr. Bunting, but asked what defence he was to make of Dr. Bunting against the charge brought by others. This in a purely *private* letter could hardly be brought under the heading "calumny," under which it was now placed.



At this stage Mr. William Bunting deprecated any further pressing of the matter, especially out of consideration of Mr. Lumb's advanced age and the fact that he had written under extraneous influence, concluding thus: "Mr. Lumb cannot disclose the names." The President ruled that Mr. William Bunting's remarks would come better after the resolution was passed. The resolution was accordingly put and passed.

Mr. Lumb: "I am sorry that I have pained Dr. Bunting and reflected on the Conference."

Dr. Bunting: "I wish to be put in collision with those who render it necessary to defend me, and know them, and see them, and deal with them."

Mr. Lessey pressed to know whether it was a Preacher who had said what he had reported to Dr. Bunting.

Mr. Lumb: "It was a preacher, but Mr. Bunting does not require the name."

The Conference clamoured: "We must have the name," and this was carried by vote.

Mr. Lumb then explained that in yielding to the demand of Conference he should make no breach of confidence. The words quoted were not like his own letter to Dr. Bunting, a strictly private communication never meant to go any farther, but were spoken in public by—he then named a venerable member of the Conference, resident in Leeds—John Farrar, senr.

A powerful sensation was produced.

However, neither Mr. Farrar nor any other person said a word upon the subject until, four days later, the question came in the regular course: "Any objection to John Farrar, senr.?" The answer was "The question could not yet be answered, but must stand over." This naturally raised the apprehensions of the brethren that the case had proved of greater gravity than was at first supposed. But not a word was said about the case till it had been allowed another week to ripen. On the last day but one of Conference, when all the odds and ends of business must needs be cleared away, Dr. Bunting, of his own accord, informed the Conference that he had put a question to Mr. Farrar, and if he had not denied having said anything of the kind on the public occasion referred to, he at least denied recollection. "So the matter ends between *me* and Mr. Lumb, who, we hope, is not quite right in his mind."

The President: "Is the matter between Mr. Lumb and the Conference ended?" It was decided that a letter should be sent to Mr. Lumb.

Many readers probably will sympathise with Mr. William Bunting in the wish that this matter should not have been

pressed to such a profitless extreme. Looked at calmly, it must be seen to be of comparatively slight importance beyond that which Dr. Bunting chose to give it. The letter being strictly private, he might, without the slightest loss of dignity, have performed for it in private the office which he wished the writer of it to perform in Conference : tear it into tatters, and have done with it. Mr. Lumb made no statement, on his own authority, but what was admitted to be true—namely, that his name had been appended to a document, and printed in the *Minutes*, despite his own repeated protest ; and that his letters to the Conference on the subject had been intercepted and suppressed. This was a real and provoking grievance, for which the venerable missionary hero could get no apology whatever. The other matters were what he believed a brother minister had said in public ; with a request to know how he might rebut the accusations. To call this "calumny," as it was called in Conference, was itself an unwarranted abuse of language. Stout old Matthew Lumb was not the only man in that same Conference who had ever been betrayed into regrettable extravagance of speech. The affair had a lame and impotent conclusion. Ten days elapsed before the Conference could ascertain whether Father Farrar had really said these things in public, or had not. Yet he was on the spot, and, as I can testify, was well able to defend either his Master or himself. His memory could not have been much more trustworthy than that of his old friend Lumb, since it required ten days to be quite sure he did not recollect it. Even then it required the practised questioning of Dr. Bunting in private to bring it into proper exercise, and the task of conveying the results to Conference was put into the same most competent and able hands.

When the question came : "Any objection to Samuel D. Waddy?" the question was put by the President whether he and his colleagues had taken some part in speaking in behalf of some Parliamentary candidate ?

Mr. S. D. Waddy : "I claim the right to be heard, I supported a candidate on *religious* grounds ; one who would support the established Church."

Dr. Bunting interjected : "That is the backbone of conservatism in our Body." Mr. Waddy : "I am not prepared to say I will not do as I have done. I think I acted in accordance with the principles of the Minutes. If the Established falls, we shall suffer. I question the soundness of the argument : If you take one side, I shall take the other. No man has a right to take the wrong side."

The Secretary of the Conference, Newton, spoke twice, and strongly against Mr. Waddy's public interference with electioneering matters.

Dr. Bunting: "I am not prepared to state the matter so broadly as Mr. Newton has done. I think it indiscreet in Mr. Waddy and Mr. G. B. McDonald to speak in committees and meetings preparatory to nominations. Let a man do it under responsibility. We (on the Church side) are in a majority. Why can't the minority let us alone? Mr. Wesley would have interfered with elections. He did so in the sending for John Crickett. I think Messrs. Waddy and McDonald have acted indiscreetly in mixing themselves up in the way in which they have done. Not in having appeared upon the hustings in favour of a party candidate."

Mr. Taylor: "Did not Mr. McLean attempt to harangue a mob out of doors?" Mr. McLean: "I must say that in a sense I did so. I went to hear the Tory candidate speak. I had declined to speak, and advised my brethren not to do so; but I attempted to call a meddling lawyer to order. That is the head and front of my offending. I acknowledge I did wrong; I went a step too far." Mr. George B. McDonald: "We took part in the election on religious grounds, we wished to increase the number of religious persons in the House of Commons."

Thus three of the ablest and most popular of the younger ministers in Methodism had taken a prominent and eager part in an electioneering contest in the Methodist town of Sheffield. As is well known, Dr. Waddy lived to blame his conduct in this matter quite as strongly as he had once defended it. He confessed to me that the meddling lawyer had made the three brethren look and feel particularly small.

So far as I remember, not one of these effective ministers was ever tempted to repeat the escapade.

Dr. Bunting finished the discussion thus: "I am of opinion that with the *machinery* of an election a Methodist preacher has nothing to do. Some have said Mr. Baines is a good man; if Mr. Baines was left to himself, I might not differ much from him."

The regular course of business was broken into by a request from Bedford for advice in regard to licensing their chapels, the Bill for the solemnisation of marriage in Nonconformist chapels, by Nonconformist Ministers, having passed not long before.

Dr. Bunting: "I am glad the people have had the discretion to wait. I wish the Conference to come to no decision. It is not a matter of conscience. The Plan of Pacification was a matter of concession, and not an everyday occurrence."

Dr. Bunting denounced the Bill at some length, and with great warmth.

Mr. Burdsall: "If any conscientious man wishes to be married by me, what am I to do?"

Mr. Scott : " We are not to be understood to prohibit it. I would not say that the chapels should not be licensed or a preacher prohibited. I should seriously deprecate being placed under any interdict. It would do harm."

Mr. W. Bunting : " Marriage is no part of the ministerial function. The Apostles did not marry people. The distinction must be kept up between the Sacraments and marriage. It is a practical fallacy to talk of accepting it. We did not seek the Bill. I have no objection to it in perpetuity. I should like to go to Church to be married to my wife once a quarter."

But it was of little use for Mr. Bunting to " Go on refining, and think of convincing, while men thought of dining," in the Conference as he did in the pulpit. The dinner-hour had come, the debate was adjourned, and was not resumed. Thus Dr. Bunting's point was carried, " to come to no decision." Things remain as before, no opinion given ; the question left open.

On the question being put : " Any objection against Thomas Galland ? " Dr. Bunting said : " I wish to ask if Mr. Galland is the author of *an incendiary letter* ? " Mr. Galland replied that he was not aware that he had ever written any letter to which a term so offensive could be truthfully applied. But since Dr. Bunting had used that term with regard to some production which he supposed to be that of Thomas Galland, he must request and, if necessary, require that the letter be submitted to the judgment of the Conference, who must pronounce whether it deserved or not the stigma of being incendiary.

This was an incident in the Church rate controversy. Statements had been made and arguments set forth by the Wesleyan ministers, as well as clergymen of the Established Church, and reported in the newspapers, to show that no Wesleyan Methodist could with any show of consistency oppose the Church rates, although two *Government* Bills had passed the House of Commons for the abolition of that, to many, very irritating impost. The vicar of Leeds, Dr. Hook, had pressed this contention against the anti-Church Rate Methodists of Leeds, who were headed by a Wesleyan Methodist alderman, one of the founders of our Missionary Society, and, along with Dr. Bunting, a speaker at the first missionary meeting. He was a member of Mr. Galland's flock. Now the Wesleyan anti-Church-Raters thought that they had both the Christian and the Connexional competence to defend themselves against these charges. So Mr. Galland, who had taken it into his Yorkshire head that he had as much right to oppose Church rates as any of his brethren had to advocate their penal

enforcement, wrote to the *Leeds Mercury*, rebutting the assumption of the vicar and his Methodist sympathisers that any Wesleyan Methodist who supported the Government measure for the Church rate abolition was disloyal to the principles of Wesleyan Methodism. Now it was Dr. Bunting's vehement contention that this was even so. When, therefore, Mr. Galland's letter appeared in the *Leeds Mercury*, consisting of arguments which were very "bad to beat, and a job to answer," the fat was in the fire; and although the Connexional chimney had more than once been strenuously swept, the Church Rate pleaders set up the cry of "incendiary."

Dr. Bunting would not withdraw the offensive epithet, but added others not so violent:—

"I think the letter unwise and indiscreet. There are principles we are pledged to maintain; they are our property: they are Wesleyan. We do not insist on *your* agreeing with *us* in holding principles; but we must *act upon* our Wesleyan principles. *Ours* is the Wesleyan principle acknowledged. *We* will think no worse of *you*: will give you a hearty shake of the hand, and will not go to extremes. *We* will treat *you* with forbearance, and will not wound your feelings. *Ours* is and must be, to all eternity, Wesleyanism. I take this opportunity of delivering my sentiments."

This deliverance of Dr. Bunting's sentiments is as explicit as his pronouncement of the Wesleyan principle is peremptory and, in his own view, obligatory and final; what must be to all eternity. His practical position, his working hypothesis, is also clear and positive. *We*, who have publicly defended Church rates, have but been acting out our loyalty to the eternal principles of our Connexion. You, who have stated your objections to this impost, have been undutiful to your father Wesley, and your mother Methodism. We will treat you with forbearance, and will not hurt your feelings; but we must brand as incendiary your taking the opportunity of delivering your sentiments.

Mr. Galland's answer was both apposite and simple. He did not think that the Minutes of 1834 on Mr. Stephens's case required our allegiance to the principles laid down by Dr. Bunting. Mr. Wesley's practical principle is stated by himself in a letter to his brother Charles: "I will neither set up nor pull down establishments." Mr. Galland's own opinion was that the Establishment is good; though both his private and his public opinion was that Church rates were fairly questionable, even

by those who wish well to the Establishment. He complained of "the interruptions he had suffered" in the expression of his conscientious convictions as a member of the Conference.

It will be seen at once that Mr. Galland makes here a point of great importance. The Wesleyan principle which Dr. Bunting strove to make "eternal" was not a *John* Wesleyan, but a *Charles* Wesleyan principle, which Dr. Bunting had insisted on with *Charles* Wesleyan finality.

Mr. Galland finished by repeating his request that either the offensive epithet should be withdrawn or the letter should be read to, and pronounced on, by the Conference.

The President: "Mr. Galland should have the letter in his hand, say if it his, and have it read if he choose." Mr. Galland: "I claim this." But Dr. Bunting paid as little heed to the ruling of the President as to Mr. Galland's claim. He persisted in the epithet, and would not hand over the letter to be identified and read. Mr. Galland declared that until the President's decision was fulfilled, or until Dr. Bunting would in some way retract his opinion expressed in Conference in such an unconfidential style, he could neither vote nor speak in Conference any more.

Dr. Bunting: "Mr. Galland will never get me to withdraw whatever I called it. I did not call it 'incendiary' because it appeared in the *Mercury*." Mr. Scott referred to the mischief of going into the discussion any further.

Dr. Bunting: "Will Mr. Galland do me the injustice of stating that I said he was the author of the incendiary letter?" Mr. Galland: "I will not sit as a dishonoured member of the Conference. If I cannot have what the President says I ought to have, I will make my bow." Mr. Naylor hoped that Mr. Galland would withdraw anything which sounded like a threat, as otherwise the brethren could not freely adjudicate upon the case. Mr. Galland: "I withdraw anything which might seem a threat. Were I compelled to leave Methodism, it is I that should be loser. I never could be an enemy."

Mr. Lessey: "Mischievous as the discussion of political matters unquestionably is, it could not be forbidden on the one side and allowed upon the other." Mr. Galland: "As a gentleman by education, and in character and conduct, I cannot sit down under Dr. Bunting's imputation unless the letter be adjudicated on."

Dr. Bunting: "For the *fifth* time, I said nothing about authorship."

This was a feat of forgetfulness; Dr. Bunting had started the discussion by saying: "Is Mr. Galland the *author* of an incendiary letter?"

Mr. Galland: "If Dr Bunting will withdraw the word incendiary, the whole affair shall drop."

Dr. Bunting: "*No*; I must not be drawn into a *personal* matter; I have no wish to say anything about the authorship. I thought my opinion might have weight with Mr. Galland. If you must adjudicate on any point, let it be on the point I brought forward, and not something as wide as the poles asunder. I move: 'That no brother shall circulate a political pamphlet.'" Dr. Beaumont: "I move the addition, 'or write a political letter to a newspaper.'"

But that would never do: it would have linked together Dr. Bunting and Mr. Galland in the self-same condemnation. And to see these two handcuffed together and marched off to the Connexional "correction of the stocks" would have been too grim a joke. The line of legitimacy must be drawn outside the precedents which the mover of the resolution had himself set.

The last speaker on this subject was Mr. William Bunting, who declared: "If this resolution is to preclude the appeal of Mr. Galland for the withdrawal of the word 'incendiary' or the reading of the letter to which it is applied, I cannot approve of it."

The President ruled Mr. William Bunting out of order, and thus reversed his former ruling, on the ground that no *charge* can be brought against Mr. Galland or Dr. Bunting.

The resolution passed.

Mr. Galland: "I am not satisfied. It would have been more grateful to me if the letter had been gone into. I can take no part in the business of Conference. I am thankful to Dr. Beaumont for his interposition at the proper time."

Dr Bunting: "I am prepared to return a friendly salute; if a hostile shot be fired, I am also ready. But I hold the same opinion of the tendency of the letter. I believe that Mr. Galland *intended* nothing mischievous. I still hold my opinion of the impropriety of Dr. Beaumont's reference, and of Mr. Galland's animadversions when the vote of thanks was moved."

One can but ask why the rightful, equitable ruling of the President in favour of Mr. Galland's reasonable claim to have his branded letter read should have been so coolly and so firmly disregarded. I can conceive but two causes for this resolute resistance of authority in its impartial adherence to the established rule of procedure in all such cases: (1) The reading of the letter would have been the completest refutation and the most condign rebuke of the opprobrious adjective adopted and persisted in. There was nothing in the letter in the least degree inflammatory. It owed its cogency to its calmness, its moderation, and sobriety; for

extravagance was no idiom of the Galland dialect. (2) The letter entirely exonerated Methodist objection to the levying of Church rates from the charge of hostility to the Church.

It showed how widely the tithes and offerings of the City of God in past ages differed from the enforcement under penalty of an irritating tax upon multitudes who were already burdened with the sustentation of their own ministers and churches, to meet the current expenses of the wealthiest denomination in the land. But Mr. Galland was "no his lane" in the charge of pamphleteering in defence of Nonconformity. The Superintendent minister of the very chapel where the Conference was sitting was shortly afterwards called in question for "having published a pamphlet" replying to a letter in favour of Church rates.

The redoubtable vicar had opened his commission in that great Nonconformist centre, Leeds, by what looked like, and what proved to be, a declaration of war against all Nonconformist intrusions in his domain. Mr. Vevers, the Superintendent of Leeds Brunswick, had replied to this in *A letter to the Rev. W. Hook on his Inaugural Discourse, by an Observer*. This pamphlet was now challenged in the Conference as an obnoxious interference between a vicar and his parishioners.

Mr. Vevers answered: "I complain of not having any notice, but am ready to meet any accusation."

Dr. Bunting: "In a house called 'honourable,' when a member has anything to say to another, he gives him notice; it is not necessary to give it in writing."

If this rule had been adhered to by the great Methodist debater who here so opportunely called attention to it, how much unhealthy soreness and heart-burning had been saved! For instance, in the case of Thomas Jackson, sensitively detailed in his *Recollections*; and if the "proprieties of that honourable House" in the employment of epithets in interrogating an opponent had also been observed at this same Conference, how much time and temper had been saved! But stout old ex-President Treffry remarked that the real fault of Mr. Vevers' pamphlet was its *tameness*.

The President reminded Mr. Waddy, the questioner, that "The vicar of Leeds claimed all the Methodists within his parish as his own parishioners." This point was as strong as it was sharp, for what space was there for any resident in the parish to interfere between the man and his parishioners when the fact



of his residing within a certain boundary constituted him a parishioner himself. So this indictment was allowed to drop.

Some sensational exorbitance of the irrepressible James Bromley seemed at this time to be *provided always* as a part of the unwritten *Agenda* of the Conference, and this year he out-Bromleyed Bromley. The most renowned professor of strong language might well have taken lessons at his feet. Afterwards, however, he made a very humble apology in writing. He expressed his adherence to the general polity of Methodism, and promised that he would refrain from intermeddling in the future. On this ground the District recommended the acceptance of his apology. A charge was made against his general conduct; but nothing tangible appeared.

Dr. Bunting took occasion, from the loss to Methodism of the eloquent, able young Forsyth, to offer to the younger brethren some most judicious and helpful observations on the responsibility of Conference as the custodian of the doctrines which had been the making of Methodism.

Ralph Gibson, Superintendent of the Mansfield Circuit, was interrogated closely as to a secession which had there occurred, but was found to have "acted with propriety." A younger brother was charged by the District Meeting with not having a right sense of common things, and not behaving properly in the house of his Superintendent, and was recommended to be continued on trial. Very strict inquiry was also made as to the mental competence for our ministry of the candidates for ordination. Two were kept on trial for a fifth year, and one was "dropped." One of the former had not made the proficiency in his studies which he ought to have done. Mr. S. Dunn spoke kindly of another candidate as to his "affectionate disposition and the passability of his MSS. sermons."

Dr. Bunting: "Many men can write sermons who cannot preach successfully. I would ask if there is any other preacher to whom objection has been made on the ground of incompetence? I believe the answer will be 'No.' Then I would ask if there are not men in our Connexion who are manifestly unsuitable? Why not name them? Is this to be everlastingly the case?"

Dr. Bunting: "I am almost ashamed to mention something with regard to myself. I must say that I have had no time to prepare the ex-Presidential charge. Will the Conference allow me to read, instead, some heads of a former charge. I shall esteem it a personal favour." (Agreed.)

To hear Dr. Bunting *read* the outline of an old charge was better worth the young man's while than to stand a brand-new charge from almost any other man.

Some fine fellows were received on trial, such as Louis Rees, from City Road, and James Calvert, a Methodist preacher of the primitive class.

Of all the *obituaries* of the year, the most touching to myself was that of John Bakewell Moulton, who died at the age of thirty, in the sixth year of his itinerancy. He was, I think, the most fascinating young Methodist minister I ever met with. He was the first Moulton it was my privilege to know, and had all the gentleness, and manliness, and native gentlemanliness characteristic of that family. He seemed built for a long, effective ministry. An appreciative memorial was read, which Dr. Bunting wished to be "qualified," as he had "not been Methodistically loyal," having differed on a constitutional point—namely, the ordination by imposition of hands.

A complaint was made against a young minister who had previously been stationed at the chapel where the Conference was being held. The Superintendent designated him as "the most perfect mischief-maker." It was proposed that he should be sent for, but this was deprecated, as, if he were brought to Leeds, he would do more mischief than he had done, and it was suggested that he should be tried in the District where he then was.

Dr. Bunting: "I think it would be well to bring him here, but must say that the Conference has the power to drop him, as he is on trial. Mr. Wesley did so sometimes, and, rightly or wrongly, we have done it hitherto."

He was sent for, but replied that he had not sufficient money to pay his fare to Leeds, and complained that his Superintendent had given him no intimation of the charge till two hours before he left for Conference. This was declared to be insufficient. The Bristol preachers were commissioned to investigate his case, and authorised to dismiss him if they thought it best. I remember him well at Leeds. His reading and his intellectual power gave promise of effectiveness, but an over-developed and aggressive self-esteem appeared to have disqualified him for Connexional service. He found a more congenial sphere elsewhere.

The Liskeard Superintendent was closely questioned as to a division in the society. It appeared that the Superintendent had acted unconstitutionally.

Dr. Bunting: "We must take our people with us, and not act in the Bashaw style. To give notice of leaving a man off the plan won't do; you must have the consent of the local preachers." A conversation took place on

the power to retain a local preacher on the plan, against the judgment of his brethren. The conversation was adjourned.

The case of a well-conditioned supernumerary was again referred to, who, with his family, regularly attended church, not chapel. His son was a distinguished Oxford don, the first—but not the last—Regius Professor of Divinity in Oxford who had been trained in Methodism.

Dr. Bunting: "I contend that the system of Methodism must be kept open. We will not have Methodism a *sect*; we may go to church, and we may go to chapel and be Methodists. I knew a deacon of a chapel in Manchester who was a Methodist. We must have the generous, noble character of Methodism upheld. The point is, his regularly attending church instead of chapel, not attending District Meeting, etc." Decided to send him a letter requiring his presence at the District Meeting.

I have myself been Superintendent of a City Circuit in which one of the two Circuit stewards was at the same time a leader and a local Preacher, and churchwarden of the parish church.

The brother of the Secretary of the Conference was charged with the unconstitutional expulsion of members of the society. A Minor District Meeting had so found. He was condemned and removed from the Circuit. Another brother was accused of "not having much love to Methodism." Sentence: To be tried another year, and specially reported on.

This long-suffering discipline awoke in him a potential love of Methodism, and he proved a steady-going, manageable, and managing Methodist preacher.

Mr. Dixon, Chairman of the Liverpool District, reported the proceedings of a Minor District Meeting held at Chester, on an individual who had been expelled.

Mr. Lessey: "It was not a Minor District Meeting, but a deputation to inquire into the case."

Dr. Bunting: "The explanation to the Conference may go on, but I protest against an inquiry three years after the event." The case was very peculiar.

And so was the individual "put out"; yet he was a Methodist minister's son, and a President's son-in-law, and father of one of the very best Methodist laymen that ever lived, and loved, and laboured, who was sorely missed when he was gone.

On the motion for a vote of thanks to Dr. Hannah for his pro-Presidential sermon, Dr. Bunting gave it as his judgment

that, instead of appointing the officials to preach before the Conference, men of leisure and of talent should be chosen.

The theological examination of candidates for ordination was once more a delectable oasis of sweet springs and palm trees in the dusty pilgrimage of ecclesiastical business.

Dr. Bunting was again the real examiner. The chief subject was our *birth relation* to the first Adam and the second.

Dr. Bunting said: "He who refuses to come to the second Adam adopts the guilt of the first Adam, and makes it all his own."

Here, again, Dr. Bunting was perfectly Fletcherian.

Dr. Hannah said that he was specially careful to inculcate on the students' minds this vital and essential truth. It is certainly the key of the true Arminian position and, indeed, of the New Testament position too. The same doctrine was discussed again in the conversation on the *Pastoral Address*. As Mr. Dixon had again the writing of this, it was listened to with even more than usual interest.

Dr. Bunting objected to the phrase "grace of justification." He said: "Our people are not accustomed to this language." Mr. W. Bunting: "I object to the phrase used with regard to infants—'state of initiatory justification'—as unscriptural." Dr. Bunting: "It would be more correct to say, 'initiatory or provisional acceptance.'" Mr. Hannah: "It would avoid an ambiguous expression." Mr. R. Wood demurred to anything that might suggest baptismal regeneration. Dr. Bunting thought that Mr. Dixon's phrase did this. "This is the High Church principle; mind what you do." Mr. Entwisle: "I am afraid the expression would do harm. Our people will think that we believe in baptismal regeneration." Mr. Dixon defended his expression. Dr. Bunting: "Are you getting into the Church notion? I deny baptismal regeneration. *When* children can become holy, God has not told us; it is one of the secret things that belong to the Lord." Mr. Marsden: "The Apostle, in the passage quoted, makes no reference to baptism. The question is, what *relative* change takes place in infant baptism?" Dr. Bunting was not prepared to answer Mr. Marsden's question, but "must insist that, when born, we are placed in a provisional state of salvation." Mr. Dixon: "I should be sorry if any document of mine contained contrary opinions. I believe and preach that by baptism we are brought into visible connection with the Church." A committee was appointed to revise the sentence in question.

In this most interesting discussion we again miss the voice of Thomas Galland, whom Dr. George Smith ("History of Methodism") justly regards as, perhaps, the greatest expositor of his time, truly pronouncing his expositions "wonderful."

But that "incendiary" torch was for the time damped and dimmed.

Mr. Naylor: "I think the reference in the Address to 'the prosperous state of the Connexion' is not borne out by facts, especially the decrease of numbers." Mr. Dixon: "I was not aware of the decrease at the time I drew it up; the numbers had not yet been reported, through the remissness of the Superintendents"; and on Dr. Bunting's motion it was resolved that henceforth the numbers should be taken in March. Dr. Bunting: "Boasting is the sin of Methodism; everybody else sees it. I wish we saw it. I have no sufferance for this self-glorying. Witness all that stuff in the *Watchman* about our funds, when we are at our wits' end to keep from want our widows, and must have another collection." Mr. Dixon: "I am not in the habit of boasting; it is wrong, and does us harm. We should go from this Conference humbled, and determined to devote ourselves wholly to our work." Mr. Melson having repeated in Conference what he had said in the District Meeting as to the hindrances to the work—

Mr. Bunting said: "We are not at liberty to say in the District Meeting what Mr. Melson says he has said. We are there to perform administrative acts. If we have anything wrong to say, the Conference is the place."

The conversation on the decrease was most instructive.

Mr. S. D. Waddy said: "I think we should be guarded in speaking against revivalism, saying the cause of declension is the having had a revival. We are naturally given to lassitude, and need stirring up." Mr. Reece: "If after the revival there comes a decline, I ask, Were the converts nursed? I have found early morning services and band meetings most useful in conserving converts." Dr. Bunting: "We may excel in getting revivals, but we have yet to learn how to manage them." Mr. Lessey: "Many are called revivalists who are not so; there is too much artificiality in our revivals. A revival of the work of God must begin in the minister's own heart, and we should look for converts in all our services. We should then have a continuous operation of the convincing Spirit. I regret the distinction between a revival-preacher and others." Dr. Bunting: "I agree with Mr. Lessey in the main, but as in nature there are thunderstorms, so in grace God sometimes goes out of His ordinary way." Mr. Lessey: "If God pours a mighty flood from heaven, we thank Him for it." Mr. Marsden: "I was awakened under Mr. Benson." He then enlarged on the qualities of Benson's preaching, which made him a revivalist from the beginning to the end of every service. He dwelt upon the usefulness of the society meeting in attaching young converts. Mr. McLean dwelt first upon the sovereignty of God in the choice of instruments and seasons, Mr. Fowler thought, unduly and unpractically, to the overlooking of the fixed conditions of ministerial success. Yet he admitted that our unfaithfulness might break the continuity of the Spirit's work. Mr. Burdsall: "I hope that God will make us all revivalists in the best sense. But I think we may mistake a spirit of excitement for religion. What should be done is this: Do not let revivals get into the hands of persons who are a discredit to us." The President: "We are dishonoured by such jigs as 'Come to Jesus.'" Mr. Newton: "I have heard 'Come to Jesus' "

sung by the people with profit, and I am Methodistical." Dr. Beaumont : " I would have the ministers themselves take part in revival services. I wish we went more frequently into those meetings, and more willingly. I think this conversation is the most important part of our Conference. This decrease deeply affects me. We need both ' the early and the latter rain,' the gentle showers and the thunderstorm." Dr. Bunting : " Instead of ' Come to Jesus ' and ranting tunes, we should have ' God of all grace and majesty.' "

It was found that, whilst the Connexion generally had suffered loss, the contiguous districts of Lincoln and Hull had been enjoying great prosperity—the former having an increase of 564 and the latter of 458, about half the latter District being situated within the former county. This occasioned comment on the high quality of Lincolnshire Methodism. All who knew the Founder's native county at the time could not only confirm but also account for this blessed fact. For at least a generation " the Lincolnshire preachers " had been a proverb of simplicity and fervour, and of hardy, plodding earnestness. At this very Conference of 1837 the two most stirring sermons it was my lot to listen to were from men whose humble names were household words amongst the farmers and the fisher-folk of that productive shire—Leonard Posnett and Thomas Padman. There was about these men an animation and a realistic energy which caught hold upon the hearers like a reaching tongue of flame. Posnett's text was " How shall we escape, if we neglect so great salvation ? " and Padman's " Whose fan is in His hand, and He will thoroughly purge His floor and gather the wheat into His garner, but will burn up the chaff in unquenchable fire."

The crucial case in stationing was that of a successor to James Dixon in the Liverpool South Circuit. That some hitch was toward was indicated by a grave deliverance from Dr. Bunting on " the importance of not disturbing the stations as drawn up by the Committee, especially in the case of Superintendents." The worst of Dixon was the awkwardness of finding his successors. The Liverpool people thought the appointment of two steady-going, sedative Superintendential ministers to the same Circuit inexpedient, especially in the neighbourhood of Raffles and McNeil and the brilliant Martineau. So the tranquil Mersey found itself a little ruffled.

But Dr. Bunting seemed more resolute than ever. He said : " I must say that the preachers have been parties to this opposition, which has been carried on in a most insulting way. It has been a most perfect job. I never but once received such a vituperative letter." He then read a communication to

himself from the leading men in the Liverpool South Circuit. "It addresses me as 'Honoured Sir,' and says I 'sway the Conference'; and you are a parcel of dummies if such a fool as I am can do this. I am one of the worst of men in the Body at the beginning of this letter, and a great darling at the end. Is this to be submitted to?"

Voices: "No."

Mr. Marsden: "I have received a similar letter."

Mr. Dixon: "No man can regret more than I do the spirit manifested in that letter. But this revolt is a loyal revolt. The rebels are your friends, who stood by us in the late secession. We Preachers have been reflected on by Dr. Bunting. What we have done was regular. The evil has occurred through disturbing our arrangement originally made. Mr. Young's conduct has been most honourable."

Dr. Bunting: "I would give up anything but principle to meet the case." The Conference seemed nonplussed.

At last Mr. Squance was named.

Dr. Bunting: "If Mr. Squance will go, I will submit; for it is submission." But Mr. Squance was engaged to and down for Birmingham, and its representative objected. "That will just disturb a quiet circuit to quiet a disturbed one."

Dr. Bunting: "I am sorry that the spirit of enterprise has deteriorated. In enterprise Methodism *as it is* is not Methodism *as it was*. When Mr. Wesley was written to for leave to give up a horse, he just replied: '*I cannot make preachers; I cannot buy preachers; I will not kill preachers.*'"

Dr. Bunting referred to the liberality of Mr. Lloyd, vicar of Llanbister. He had paid him "a most delightful visit. He said he had been a member of our society for fifty years. Mr. Wesley sent for him to the Bristol Conference in the Old Room. He saw Fletcher coming into the room supported by two others. Mr. Wesley invited Mr. Lloyd to be an itinerant preacher, but he could not. However, he could give money. He was the spiritual child of Sammy Bardsley. Bardsley's sermon which awakened him was from the text, 'Unto you is born this day a *Saviour*, which is Christ the Lord.' His mother, too, was awakened, and found peace before he did. He became an exhorter, but was induced to apply for orders. Not being a University man, he was ridiculed by the rest; but after his examination the Bishop said: 'Mr. Lloyd is the best scholar: he knows more of his Bible than all the rest of you put together.' He was, however, driven from his curacy, and returned to Herefordshire. But the Bishop, hearing of it, appointed him to the small living of Llanbister. He had been vicar of the parish five-and-forty years. He is distinguished for his mathematical genius."

Mr. Bunting: "I am glad to know from Mr. Galland that there are not two parties in the Conference on the *Sabbath* question. I would have it introduced into the Pastoral Address." He referred to the candidates for Parliament who had lost on this ground.

It would, indeed, be a deplorably inauspicious sign if Methodism should give in to the rationalistic hostility to the sanctity of the Sabbath now that Germany is striving hard, though almost hopelessly, to recover to the Fatherland its Sabbath, of which the critics have deprived it.

Dr. Bunting was requested to publish his charge: third time of asking. His reply was the same as after his two former presidencies: "I will publish it as I have leisure."

Mr. William Bunting was also requested to publish a sermon which he had preached during the Conference. He replied: "I am obliged by the request, but more obliged for permission to disobey it. My commission is to *preach* the Gospel, not to *print* it."

Dr. Bunting urged his son to print this sermon "by his filial relation."

E. Parry, who had been an Independent minister, but, having become a Wesleyan Methodist in doctrine, offered himself for the Methodist ministry, was put through the sieve by Mr. Reece. At the close of a strict theological examination he was asked whether he would adhere "to our principle of abstaining from political agitation, and to neither pull down nor prop up the Established Church." His ordination was, of course, recognised, and he was authorised to administer the Sacraments. Like Storry and Priestly, the ex-Congregationalists, he made an effective Methodist minister, faithful to pledges, although he was a warm pro-Liberationist, and never waxed so eloquent in private colloquy as in declaiming against the State-Church.

Dr. Bunting protested against "Any settlement Circuits for young men." He instanced Gloucester Circuit, in which the two younger men looked after each other at Tewkesbury, whilst a multitude of villages were left on the hands of the Superintendent. He proposed that the chairman of the District should give the Superintendent a list of the neglected places that lay round George Whitfield's birthplace, and see that they were properly attended to. After a warm debate, it was decided to "let it lie over." A long and stormy debate took place as to whether of two brethren should be chairman of the Shetland District.

Mr. Jackson, Senior Editor, said: "As long as the Magazine bears the title *Wesleyan*, it must maintain *Wesleyan* principles."

Dr. Bunting: "We should give away, by wholesale, Daniel Isaac's sermon on Church Communion."

Mr. Mason placed at the disposal of the Conference, as the year's profit of the Book Room, £6,940, which was distributed amongst the Connexional Funds. The Book Steward stated that he had hoped to be able to hand over to the Conference £3,000 more, but had been disappointed by the general commercial depression.

Two cases of discreditable insubordination on the part of young ministers to Superintendents occupied the time of the Conference. They were both fine fellows, neither of them without an occasional up-cropping consciousness of that fact. They only wanted breaking in, being mettlesome and of the highest blood. One, who had



been cordially censured by a Minor District Meeting, proved how "sweet are the uses" of that peculiar part of our well-devised discipline, by filling worthily the Presidential chair; the other, a richly endowed and richly cultivated minister's son, died after a short but brilliant course. He had acted in defiance of the authority of his Superintendent. He was ordered to make an apology to the Conference. Instead of this, he made a statement more like a defence; but, on being pressed, he acknowledged that he was in fault.

Mr. S. Waddy spoke in honest condemnation of youngsters opposing their Superintendents.

At the morning session of the last Monday of the Conference, Dr. Bunting not being present, only small miscellaneous matters were attended to. At last the President proposed the adjournment of the Conference, a very proper suggestion, as in Dr. Bunting's absence it appeared that nothing could be done. On the reassembling of the Conference, Dr. Bunting having returned, business was resumed. Another case of discipline being reported on, he observed: "Brother — has fallen into 'man's first disobedience,' the being ruled by his wife to do wrong."

As the first business of the Conference had been the moving an address to Queen Victoria on her accession a few weeks before, so one of its last was the reading of the address as drawn up by Mr. Hannah. A debate ensued as to the mode of presentation. Mr. S. Waddy and Mr. Burdsall proposed the asking permission for its presentation by the President and a deputation in person.

Dr. Bunting: "I am sorry to see such childish feeling. If you ask you will be denied, and how shall we look?"

The Conference of 1837 was the second to which I had the privilege of being admitted for an hour, this time as a Tutor at Woodhouse Grove. It was a most impressive sight, although the two noblest worthies, Clarke and Watson, were no longer on the platform. The choice of speakers was felicitous. The address of Edward Frazer, the ex-West Indian slave, was exquisitely tasteful and appropriate. He told us what an interest he took in the sons of Methodist preachers on account of the obligations of himself and his race for spiritual and civil freedom to the self-sacrificing labours of their fathers. He had heard many of them preach in that distant land. This was a homefelt truth, for a large percentage of the Grove boys of that time were West Indian missionaries' sons; amongst them lads like R. N. Young, the Shrewsburys and Rabys. He expressed a hope that some of those to whom he was then speaking would preach the same

Gospel in the now liberated islands. This also came true in the case of lads like Theo. Gregory.

Walter Oak Crogon, late missionary in the Isles of Greece, who was endeared to all of us by his charming papers in the *Youth's Instructor*, gave us an animated account of the schools that he had visited in classic and in Bible lands.

Our head master, Joshua Wood, M.A., a clergyman of the Church of England, surprised the reverend fathers by appearing in all the lustre of his academicals. The son of a distinguished Irish preacher, he spoke with emotion of his devoted father and of the disadvantages which the Irish Preachers' sons had suffered from the non-existence of such schools in Ireland. He spoke with devout thankfulness of the quickening and deepening of his own spiritual life by breathing the atmosphere of earnest Christian living which prevailed at Woodhouse Grove. The President informed us that George Morley was appointed Governor for another six years' term, to the thorough contentation of all whom it concerned.

Dr. Bunting advised the committee on the case to come to a conclusion with "the same wise velocity" with which the re-appointment of Dr. Beecham to the Mission House had been determined.

One of the most striking features of this Conference was the tropical luxuriance of Dr. Bunting's influence. This may be accurately gauged by comparing the state of matters at the Leeds Conference of 1830 with that which was conspicuous in 1837. The Conference of 1830 was the first from which Jabez Bunting had been absent since his admission to the ministry. His absence was deeply felt and much deplored, but the Conference pulled itself together, and, doubtless to its own surprise, found itself quite competent to administer Connexional affairs with—as history records—exceptional effectiveness, facility, and smoothness. But at the Leeds Conference of 1837 Dr. Bunting's absence for a single session brought business to a standstill, insomuch that it must needs adjourn itself till his return. But how came this about? The reason is not far to seek. During the seven intervening years—which had been thin, and blighted with the east wind of baleful Church contention—at least five of the ablest Conference men had died, who also were in the ministry before him: Clarke, Watson, Gaulter, Daniel Isaac, and James Wood. Their measured and deliberative cadences were no longer to be heard, and the honoured

places which "once knew them so familiarly, now knew them no more for ever." There was no one now to measure swords with Jabez Bunting. We have seen to what a large extent the Warrenite excesses had augmented and confirmed the preponderance of Dr. Bunting in Methodist affairs.

In a single sentence Mr. Fowler rendered permanent the impression which the discussions of this Conference had left upon his mind. It was "the most unsatisfactory Conference I have ever attended." The unpropitious elements may easily be seen. The ecclesiastico-political spirit had been disturbingly apparent. That which had been foreseen and foresaid had been all too soon manifest—the neutrality between the Established Church and political Dissent had proved to be a one-sided neutrality, which is just as unfair and as absurd as a one-sided reciprocity. The appearance of the President at a pro-Church Rate Convention in Exeter Hall, the glaringly uncivil handling of such a man as Thomas Galland for his animadversions on this and other indefensible proceedings of the retiring President, the gentleness towards political publicity on the one side, and the denunciation of it on the other, the discountenancing of the marriage of Methodist people by Methodist ministers in Methodist chapels; all this had seriously precluded one main purpose of the Conference, the "endeavouring to keep the unity of the spirit in the bond of peace." The "rift in the lute" had been rather widened than repaired.

But, happily, in the public services no sign of this was seen. There was "joy and peace, and heaven on earth begun." The thoroughfares of that great industrial centre were thronged with a multitude that kept holy-day. In they flowed from all the towns and villages of that great colony of the Methodists. In they poured, bright, fresh, exultant as "the streams that come Running down from Libanum." For the lamented decrease was not the result of depressed vitality in Methodism, but of the depletion caused by parties in the Church. The preaching and the worship showed Methodism in its pristine might. The most memorable service was that in the Conference chapel on the Conference Sunday evening. The preacher was James Dixon, the text: "According as it is written, I believed, therefore have I spoken; we also believe, and therefore speak." He began by saying: "I am not about to preach a sermon to the ministers; that would not become me." It was, however, a sermon about the ministry, especially about the Methodist ministry. It struck the

true keynote of Methodist preaching, and let out the secret of its marvellous success. In strength of conviction and energetic earnestness it was a noble illustration of his theme. It was strikingly confirmatory and elucidatory of one of Dr. Bunting's weighty sayings in the debate on the decrease: "Nothing can keep up Methodism but the spirit of conviction in its preachers, with an awakening preaching which must thence result."

But powerful as the preaching was, the giving out of the preparatory and applicatory hymns, and the resultant voicing of them by that mighty mass of Methodism, as it heaved heavenward with emotion, was more kindling and inspiring still. With impassioned and sonorous elocution the preacher filled the spacious sanctuary and the expanding heart with such sentiments as these:—

"Jesus, the word of mercy give,  
And let it swiftly run;  
And let *the priests themselves believe*,  
And put salvation on."

And then, as the culminating aspiration—

"Give *me* the *faith* that can remove,  
And sink the mountain to a plain."

I want an *even, strong* desire;  
I want a calmly fervent zeal,  
To save poor souls out of the fire;  
To *snatch* them from the verge of hell,  
And lead them to the pardoning God,  
And quench the brands in Jesu's blood."

#### BRISTOL CONFERENCE OF 1838.

The Conference of 1838 was held at Bristol. As it had been determined to celebrate, during this Methodist year, the centenary of Methodism as a Church organisation, it was felt advisable to elect as President the minister who was most familiar with the chronicles of early Methodism, that he might most fittingly preside over and address the great centenary meetings through the land. This man was clearly Thomas Jackson.

On the election into the Legal Conference of John Waterhouse, who was ready to depart for New Zealand, Dr. Bunting remarked "that Wesley had himself placed in that

body men who were unable to attend the Conference." Some awkward blunders, which had been made in the Conference Journal, induced the brethren to decide that each day's entries should be read next morning. The mover of the vote of thanks to Mr. Keeling as a letter writer, having dilated on his acquirements in philosophy and history, Dr. Bunting, in seconding, congratulated him on his having kept both his philosophy and his rhetoric out of his letters from the Conference. The ex-President moved that, to save the time of Conference, one person should only speak once on the same subject.

Dr. Bunting objected to any such restriction.

It being proposed to admit a member of the Baltimore Conference,

Dr. Bunting said: "There is a mistake about Dr. Fisk's book. The author was educated a Republican. I was educated a Wesleyan Loyalist. The book is eulogistic: it says better things about us than we who know ourselves think we deserve. We must not be over-sensitive. It is well to hear what other people think of us."

Dr. Beaumont: "I concur with Dr. Bunting."

A curious case was that of a Quaker, who had been baptised by Mr. Bowers.

Mr. Prest: "I refused to baptise him merely to pass the Conference."

Dr. Beaumont: "I think we have too loose notions about baptism."

Mr. Grindrod: "Better have the whole case before us, and then reason upon it." It appeared that he wished to be baptised in a solemn public manner.

Dr. Bunting: "I wish to know why it was not so done. I think we are going as remote from the Bible as are the Oxford tracts; an error not as fatal but as remote from the truth. It is quite Methodistical to lay the blame on the absent; but why lay it on a venerable supernumerary?" (it was said to be attributable to Mr. Roberts). "Why not lay it on persons in heaven, who care nothing about it? We should not shift it from ourselves to venerable supernumeraries."

Mr. Scott: "When I went to Bristol I found that Mr. L. and several other members of the society had never been baptised. The blame rests with Mr. P. Turner and Mr. J. Taylor."

Mr. Taylor: "I think taking the Lord's Supper is necessary to membership, but not the being baptised."

Dr. Bunting spoke against private baptism, and said he never would perform it.

Dr. Beaumont: "Baptism should never be smuggled into a private room."

Mr. Duncan: "Where there is one baptism by a travelling preacher, there are five by local preachers."

Mr. Scott: "Mr. L. should not be put to disadvantage in this matter."

Dr. Bunting: "He should be carefully questioned on this subject and on the Lord's Supper and the Lord's Day."

William Clegg, jun., a medical man, was accepted, whose "plain, pointed preaching was attended with much Divine influence."

This continued through his brief ministry. His character and preaching were exquisitely simple and refined.

The character of John Hartley, of Leeds East, affirmed him "to be in the apostolical succession."

Dr. Bunting: "I strongly reprehend the introduction of this expression."

It was stated that Henry Hine had expressed doubts as to the observance of Good Friday.

Dr. Bunting: "I would have him questioned as to his general thinking."

Dr. Bunting, on the case of E. B., said: "Men of classical education and medical knowledge ought to go to the foreign work." Edward Horton, from the New Connexion, was required to sign the Minutes of 1797 and 1835.

He proved a powerful preacher, but died young.

Joshua Priestly, an Independent minister, who had passed five years at Airedale College (his mother was a Methodist), was heartily received.

Mr. Fowler notes a discreet settlement of a difficult case. One of the most popular probationers in the Connexion had been convicted of having "neglected" the lady to whom he was engaged. He was put back on the list of reserve and required not to pay addresses to any other lady; but if the one to whom he had been engaged positively refused to renew the intimacy, we could not pass on him a sentence of celibacy. A charge brought against a brother was declared "frivolous and vexatious," and recommended "to be laid on the table."

Dr. Bunting: "An affectation of Parliamentary language by one who is unacquainted with its usage. To lie on the table means that a motion may be grounded on it at any future time."

Mr. Duncan: "Was nothing done in the Sheffield District relative to Mr. T. and Mr. W.?"

Mr. Reece: "A letter was read, but nothing was done about it and nothing recorded."

Dr. Bunting: "That is wrong. You had no right to swamp it."

It appeared that Mr. W. had offended Mr. T. by an off-hand word, and not made a satisfactory apology. The whole affair passed off with one of Mr. W.'s daring witticisms.

A charge was brought against a popular young minister by a Quarterly Meeting, of his not having honourably adhered to his engagement to the Circuit. The committee found that he was not free from blame in the affair.

James Bromley signified that he "retains his objection to some rules of some year, as to the mode of admitting members into the society."

Dr. Beaumont referred to a correspondence on the subject between Dr. Bunting and Mr. Hopwood.

Dr. Bunting: "I declare that it is against our rules to propose members for full admission."

Mr. Taylor: "The law requires the reading over of the names."

Dr. Bunting: "The reading of the name is often the mere recognition of new members." Some disputation ensued between Mr. Taylor and Dr. Bunting, who did not appear to harmonise.

Dr. Bunting: "I think it is a bad plan. Bad passions may be aroused, and old prejudices. Good men might not be kept in, and bad men not kept out. Men who have allowed this system have done wrong, whether Mr. Taylor, Edmondson, Entwisle, or whoever they may be. You put out A. for not agreeing to it, and brought B. to trial. You are democratic at bottom—more democratic than you know. With intentions like angels, you do the case great harm. If Leaders stay away from a meeting, what harm? If some men should only attend the Leaders' Meeting once a quarter, to pay in money, and stay away all the rest to say their prayers, what harm? I am sorry to hear from a man I greatly revere what I have heard."

Mr. McLean: "If it were possible to prevent Mr. Bromley's annual appeal against our discipline, it would be very desirable."

Dr. Bunting: "If the Chairman would say nothing to him, on condition of his keeping his peculiarities to himself, he may think himself well off." Thomas Ludlam had published a book, "Robert Newton, a Minister of Jesus Christ," in reference to which Dr. Bunting said: "Courtesy is regulated by the conventional rules of society, and sometimes in violation of the Scripture rule, 'Be courteous.'"

Isaac Keeling "had got into trouble in Sunderland by attempting to break down the usage of proposing new members at the Leaders' Meeting. He had found them jealous and imperious, and he wished to know how he was to proceed."

Dr. Bunting: "I would pass sentence of death upon it, as upon slavery."

Dr. Bunting: "I have received a paper from Scotland in which it is stated that the Superintendent at Montrose had been making a speech against the Bible Society at a meeting of the Liberal Association." A letter of inquiry to be sent. The case was found to have been exaggerated. A request was presented that the public examination of the candidates might be held in two chapels.

Dr. Bunting: "I think that can't be done, but we might appoint a Love Feast." It was replied that two services had been held at the Birmingham Conference, when Dr. Bunting was the President. He, however, objected to a repetition of this, and that settled the affair.

Dr. Bunting, at the close of the theological examination of the candidates for ordination, referred to the Tractarian controversy. He said: "We are in danger of going to the opposite extreme. I think Mr. Ely's \* pamphlet goes too far. He seems to have no idea that baptism takes the place of circumcision. The Oxford tracts contain what is highly perilous, but there is

\* The eloquent Congregationalist minister of Leeds.

danger of going to the other extreme. We spent great labour on the article on baptism in our catechism. We want nothing more but to have it attended to. Our using the form adopted by the Conference is not optional. I dislike the Dissenting term 'the ordinance.' Baptism and the Lord's Supper are something more."

Mr. Edmondson: "I very much admire the form for the administration of baptism, but there are some expressions which I can hardly use. I wish we had a form in which we can all agree."

Dr. Bunting gave some very suitable admonitions—*e.g.* "Tremble to borrow money."

Dr. Bunting warned the young men against the injury sustained by an hour's prayer-meeting after the evening service.

Mr. Newton: "I give the young men the advice an old man gave me. 'Better be long little than soon nothing.'" On reassembling, it was announced to Conference that the Stationing Committee had not completed its work. The Secretary proposed the adjournment of Conference.

Dr. Beaumont "thought that so many ministers, finding themselves together and disengaged, might profitably devote a session to consultation as to the spiritual interests of the flock."

Mr. Atherton reminded the Conference that "this year Dr. Bunting was not a member of the Stationing Committee; and that, he being present, there could be no reason for waiting for anybody else."

One cannot but discern a squeeze of Atherton's lemon-juice in this remark. As senior Missionary Secretary, Dr. Bunting was a permanent member of the Stationing Committee, but its arrangements having been overruled at the last Conference, despite his protestations in the case of the Liverpool South, he had refused to serve on it again. But the brethren had acquired a taste for adjournment amidst the charms of Clifton, so they voted themselves a holiday.

The cases of J. H. J. and W. J., whose health had given way during the first year of their probation, were tenderly considered.

Dr. Bunting: "We should be careful in reference to statements of health, and inquire just before the Conference. It is better to let a young man rest a few months than have to call out a supply."

Both these able, though at that time delicate, young men were spared to do a long and hard day's work, and one of them is still afield.

Dr. Bunting: "No man should offer himself for a Circuit or say that he is fit for it."

Dr. Bunting: "You never heard me talk about any marvellous effect produced at the Institution. So much the better. Whatever rule may be adopted with regard to single men not staying longer than two years in a circuit, an exception should be made with regard to David Hay at Burslem."

What was the charm of this young David, fresh upon the battlefield, from the waving corn lands and the closely nibbled



pastures, with his scanty commissariat, his ephah of corn, his ten loaves, and his ten cheeses?. Short time had the Institution to produce its marvellous effects on him. He had not learned to shine in Saul's armour, nor even essayed to go in glittering accoutrements. He went with his five smooth stones out of the brook, polished by no lapidary but the ripple of the glancing stream. It was the brightness and the braveness, the youthful, dauntless faith of his Lincolnshire revivalism, the alertness which "ran to meet the foe," the deft directness of his aim, and his childlike confidence in "the God of the armies of Israel," whom Satan had defied.

Mr. C. was called to account for his absence from Conference during the afternoon sitting. Answer: "I was hearing Mr. Frazer."

The President: "You ought to have asked leave of the Chair."

Mr. Beecham asked permission for himself and Dr. Bunting to go off to London by the evening mail "about the marriage business."

Dr. Bunting, before he left, gave an account of his having been pressed as a sailor in London. In answer to his statement that he was a licensed minister, the captain of the gang answered that he had impressed a surly parson.

Dr. Bunting pleaded that Mr. Loxton should go to *West Bromwich*. "Mr. Dawson told me that he was the finest young man he had ever known, and if he could adapt his preaching to the middle class, would be among the greatest. Any Circuit would gain by his appointment to it."

May I add my testimony to that of these great men, since there are very few now left who remember Samuel Loxton? *West Bromwich* was his last Circuit. If not quite the finest preacher, he was one of the very finest men I ever knew.

Dr. Bunting: "The genius of Methodism is not the genius of democracy. The two can never harmonise. This party spirit of democracy is very injurious."

Mr. Newton: "I am a missionary man; but had rather Circuits did a little more for the home work."

Dr. Bunting: "Methodism has had a long trial in Scotland and little productivity."

Mr. Hall pleaded vehemently for the continuance of the preachers.

Dr. Beaumont: "Even Gospel ministers in Scotland do not preach the whole Gospel. I shared with Dr. Chalmers and he contended that death alone can prepare our souls for heaven. I replied: 'Then one petition in the Lord's Prayer was never meant to be fulfilled.'"

The President said that the vote was carried to continue the preachers as usual.

Dr. Fane: "I think it was lost."

The President: "There was slight a falling. The vote was carried, and there was no need to be a majority of seventy-six in favour of Bunting."

Almost the whole of two sessions has been consumed in altering the stations. The noise and disorder have been very great. More insipid, weary work I have seldom suffered from. Very much we needed a master mind. The absence of Dr. Bunting occasioned considerable delay in business. He had gone up to town about the Marriage Bill.

Dr. Bunting reappeared in Conference in the midst of chapel affairs.

Dr. Bunting: "There is no pecuniary responsibility on the Conference for any chapel. We should get rid of this monstrous doctrine. You must not ask the Conference to violate its own rules. We had better not open the chapel if it be not settled. We talk about chapel property as if what our enemies say were true about 'our' claiming the buildings. The buildings belong to the *doctrines* contained in our *standards*, not to *us*, or the trustees either."

Attention was called to the immense improvement in the financial condition of the Book Room during the last ten years. Its capital in 1838 was more than sixfold that of 1828.

Dr. Bunting: "I most sincerely regret that prayer-meetings in chapels on Sunday evenings have superseded meetings in houses up and down a town as formerly."

As might have been, and was expected from the character of the preaching at and since the last Conference, the ebb-tide of decrease had turned. The increase in Great Britain was 4,158.

Dr. Bunting: "I had thought of retiring from the Presidency of the Institution, but, in prospect of the centenary, will continue another year."

The retirement of Mr. Entwisle from the governorship of the Institution and from the full work was duly dwelt upon. He gave a most touching account of his conversion and call to the ministry. Brought up a Socinian in Manchester, he had been persuaded by a playmate to go to a Methodist chapel, "where there was plenty of fun." As he entered he was arrested by the text which the preacher was giving out. This impression deepened into conviction as he listened to the sermon, from "Get thee from thy country and thy kindred and thy father's house, unto a land that I will tell thee of." God laid hold of him. He "knew nothing of experimental religion, and knew no one else who did." He bought a hymnbook, and whilst reading "My God, I am Thine," etc., found the Spirit of Adoption. Before he was sixteen he began to call sinners to repentance. His outward call to the ministry was Wesley's: "*You must go.*" In his judgment, "the most beneficial and important part of the Institution training is *theology*." He retired because of "physical inequality to the work of governing young men, which requires great firmness and vigilance of oversight."

The report of the Education Committee was of great interest and importance, as showing the root-principles of our educational policy. The first resolution was: "The Conference approves of the principle of general education." Here the word "general," of course, means universal, as in the hymn lines, "The general Saviour of mankind" — "The Gospel of Thy *general* grace" =

*universal* Saviour ; *universal* grace. It is to be noted that it was felt to be quite superfluous to affirm that religion is an essential part of even elementary education, and that no education can deserve the name which does not recognise and teach this fact. At that time—so little “advanced” was the human intellect—no one thought of questioning the fact except avowed, aggressive infidels ; and that as a part of their aggressive infidelity. The first Government measure put this principle in the forefront, and nothing could induce the Government to even subsidise a merely secular education. (2) Each circuit must appoint an Education Committee, and a Connexional visitor be appointed to see that this is done. (3) Each committee must consist of an equal number of ministers and laymen. (4) That a general agent be appointed. It was reported that we had half a million scholars in our Sunday Schools.

Mr. Blackett : “Of course the Sunday School Committee will be kept under the management of the leaders’ meetings, as determined by the *Minutes* of 1827.

Mr. Atherton : “The Scotch bring all their children under their Pastoral charge. So should we. If we are pastors, we should have our lambs under our own supervision.”

Mr. S. Jackson : “I always feel it my duty to bow to Dr. Bunting, but in this matter my judgment differs from his. If we do not look after our children, infidels and political theorists will do it for us.”

Mr. Rogers : “If you create such a system as this, you will create a power very difficult to control.”

Mr. Scott : “It will require a Managing Committee in London. Perhaps we are not ready for this, but might take a move in that direction.”

Dr. Bunting’s objection to Mr. Jackson’s scheme was that it was too large, including “Sunday School teachers, choirs, etc.” We might appoint a committee to collect information. To form a Sunday School Union of our own might bring us into trouble.

Mr. Atherton insisted on “the importance of the preachers seeing that the Conference Catechisms should be taught in the schools, and examining the children on it.”

Dr. Bunting had “little fear of any scheme the Government might propose of their own accord, but the political Dissenters would set themselves against any definite doctrinal instruction. The Established Church will claim to have the religious education of Church people in its own hands, and we must claim to have that of our children in our own hands. I would have a good threshing out of the matter.”

Mr. S. Jackson : “As to our *oversight* and feeding of adults, *we are unequalled as a Church* ; but not so as to children. The English and the Scotch Churches

are before us. I do not feel particularly thankful for the committee's resolutions. I think they do not place us in a right position. I am glad a little has been done, and hope for more."

Dr. Bunting : "Mr. Jackson is a capital speech-maker, but he does nothing. We have to make his plans for him. Education will not do everything. We are committed to the plan of meeting children. Not to do so is a grievous error, if not a great sin. We should meet the children as regularly as we go into the pulpit. I am afraid we shall talk too much about the matter of improving methods."

The President was authorised to nominate the committee to arrange for the celebration of the centenary.

Dr. Bunting : "I hope a spirit of praise will come upon the preachers." Mr. Anderson moved that a day of fasting and prayer be set apart in preparation for the meetings. (Agreed.)

It was resolved that Dr. Bunting should be a member of the Stationing Committee as President of the Theological Institution.

It was proposed to raise £2,000 for the relief of a minister who was a trustee of the Edinburgh chapel.

Dr. Bunting : "I do not much like this going about for a particular case. Many people are pressed to give who cannot afford it."

Dr. Bunting's leaving Conference to look after the Negro Marriage Bill still further accentuated his ever growing importance in the Conference. The missing of the "Master Mind" by such a keen and sensitive observer as was Mr. Fowler is too significant to be ignored. The observation of Atherton and that of Samuel Jackson, "I always feel it my duty to bow to Dr. Bunting," were doubtless half in seriousness and half in satire. But there is many a true word spoken in jest. Much, of course, must be allowed for the Conference having accustomed itself so long to lean on Dr. Bunting ; but with such men in it as John Scott and Joseph Fowler, who had the truest instinct of business and administration, the Conference could very well "fen' for itself." And, as I can testify, Joseph Beaumont was as able in the chair as in the pulpit.

## CHAPTER VI.

### THE CENTENARY CELEBRATION.

THE Conference of the Centenary year was held in Liverpool, Theophilus Lessey in the chair. On Mr. Cusworth's nomination for the Hundred, it was asked from the platform whether he had signed the *General Declaration* issued by the London ministers in 1834, as his non-signing should be regarded as a disqualification for the Legal Conference.

Dr. Beaumont: "I protest against any brother being held up as *unsound* because he has not signed a composition drawn up by certain brethren stationed in London. But since this has been done, I demand the reading of the letter which I wrote, explaining why I could not sign."

Dr. Bunting replied with warmth, and dwelt on the "forbearance" with which the brethren had been treated who declined to sign.

Dr. Beaumont: "If I quarrel with Dr. Bunting, it is for quarrelling with his brethren. It is five years since this *Declaration* was sent out." Here Dr. Beaumont was called to order.

The President: "I repel this train of observation and the use of strong epithets."

Dr. Beaumont proceeded: "If I use strong epithets, it is because I am myself the subject and the victim of strong epithets. I think I am injured in not being permitted to defend myself against unfair attacks. I have been held up as unworthy of admission into the fellowship of the Legal Conference for no other cause than that I did not see it best to put my name to a document sent out by brethren who had no more right to send it out than I had not to sign it. And now it is attempted to make the having signed that document a *sine quâ non* of admission into the Legal Conference. I do complain of the intolerance of Dr. Bunting; I can find no softer word. I admire Dr. Bunting's character and his energy, but I claim the right to differ from him. If I use that right improperly, let me be corrected. But I disclaim all personal feeling against Dr. Bunting."

Dr. Bunting: "I have often found that my honour is not in my own keeping, but that of Almighty God. Who believes I said anything in Dr. Beaumont's absence I would not have said in his presence? If any man tries to believe it, let him believe it. I still maintain that no one who did not sign the Declaration ought to be elected into the Legal Conference. But I do not maintain it intolerantly or excessively; but I think it is a trust. He is not prevented from entering the Hundred by seniority, but by election. That is a favour

conferred upon a man. I think that Dr. Beaumont should give us a reason why he did not sign the Declaration."

Doubtless Dr. Beaumont would have gladly answered Dr. Bunting's challenge if this explanatory letter, written years before, had been at hand, but Mr. Reece interposed :

"In common with my brethren, I feel pain at the introduction of the subject."

Mr. Entwisle : "I would have the Conference present an example of unity and concord. I have heard Dr. Bunting speak favourably of Dr. Beaumont."

Mr. Grindrod : "I made the inquiry playfully, but had a right to express my judgment."

Dr. Bunting : "I would make a friendly inquiry of Dr. Beaumont. Is he satisfied with my explanation?"

Dr. Beaumont : "I am satisfied."

Mr. S. Dunn : "I must speak; I have not said a word out of the Conference." He then exonerated himself from all blame in not having signed the *Declaration*.

Probably most readers sympathise with the venerable Reece and Entwisle in the pain they experienced at the reintroduction of the *Declaration* business to the interruption of the unity and concord of the brotherhood in the midst of the Centenary celebration. Everyone had joined in it with the utmost cordiality, and it ought to have drawn a broad epochal line between the future and the past, or at least have effaced the party line in the Wesleyan Methodist brotherhood. The truce of God had been proclaimed. Beaumont had kindled into his most flaming eloquence. Galland had been lavish of his gold and of his richest vein of literary illustration. He had made the noblest Centenary speech I ever heard or read, going to the very heart of the historical significance of Methodism. Even Everett had thrown himself enthusiastically into the gladsome celebration. It was fondly thought that the hatchet of contention was buried out of sight and out of search, or sunk five hundred fathoms deep in the waters of the returning tide of revival and rejoicing. But this attempt, on the very threshold of the Conference of the Centenary year and in the very act of constituting that Conference, to stamp stigma and to inflict a humiliating disability on law-abiding, loyal brethren who had not felt free to commit themselves publicly to a fairly questionable statement, drawn up by a self-constituted authority—this seemed to prove that, whatever might have been the case in pre-Centenary times, there was now to be feared on the part of some undue

assumption in the Conference. The most loyal, humble-minded Methodist preacher might blamelessly refuse to sign on the bare ground of questioning the authority and competence of a number of ministers to issue such a test, simply because they had the good hap to be stationed in London in that year of grace 1834. The personal and particular reference of the officious circular was announced in its first sentence. It announced itself as called for by individuals "charging some with undue assumption." This, then, was no constitutional question; it was, properly speaking, no Connexional question. It was a matter to be settled in Conference itself. The one "some" who had charged the other "some with undue assumption" should have been brought face to face and had it out, and not put into a ferment "the Connexion at large." It was permissible in any case to hold—at least, as a "pious opinion"—that any assumption at all is "undue assumption." Full half the men, dear souls! whose names were appended to this document had not been inside the Conference half a dozen times since any "some" that could be referred to had begun to be "somebody." There was in the document no statement of principles whatever.

The present and the permanent, if not the frequently recurrent, interest of this matter is the mischief and the wrongness of issuing any test like this, excepting in some crisis of doctrine or morality. The first great evil is delusiveness and unreality as to matters of fact or of conviction. Excepting as a kind of party tactics, the whole value of such documents depends upon the pure and perfect spontaneity of signature. If any disadvantage or discredit be supposed to be attached to the not signing them, they become forthwith a delusion and a snare. If the not signing brings men into disfavour or discomfort, if it seems likely to bring a man under the dislike or the distrust of those with whom he wishes to stand well, if it would incur the displeasure of those who are in authority or in the ascendant, or unpopularity with any influential party, then the value of the individual autograph cannot be confidently relied on. This applies equally to one side of a question or the other.

Signatures under pressure of declarations drawn up by someone else are invalid and misleading. But signature under penalty is worthless altogether; and the attempt in 1839, of all years, to affix a disability, disqualification, and dishonour on the very worthiest of those who ventured to withhold their names from a manifesto to which they found themselves unable to assent,

had a very unsalutary and undesirable effect. It was avowedly intended to preclude the election or even the nomination for the Legal Conference of a man like Dr. Beaumont. The venerable ex-President, who except as a partisan was incapable of such a move, who yet suggested its adoption, confessed to Conference that when he put the question as to Mr. Cusworth, he aimed at someone else, as he knew perfectly well that Mr. Cusworth had signed the *Declaration*. The laying down of the "doctrine," so explicitly affirmed and so resolutely held, that no man who had not signed the *Declaration* was eligible for nomination to the Legal Conference, demonstrated to many minds the very fact which he denied—"undue assumption" on the part of some member or members of the governing body of the great Methodist Connexion. Thus the pre-Centenary side-taking was deliberately *carried over* to *post*-Centenary years.

The new President on taking the chair remarked: "I feel the necessity for calmness, benignity, and firmness in the discharge of my duties. I am the first son of a Methodist preacher ever elected to this office. We must abide by the *first principles* of Wesleyan Methodism. I hope the brethren will maintain manners and avoid vociferation." A good address and well received.

Mr. Entwisle: "Mr. Pawson proposed something on which Mr. Charles Wesley remarked, 'If I had wings, I could fly.' To which John Wesley answered, 'If God bids me fly, he will give me wings.' This he said had been fulfilled in the case of the retiring President."

Dr. Beaumont: "I have never seen the office filled with more *heart*, piety, zeal, and efficiency. But I fear that one of his official acts has given a political character to the Connexion. Methodism ought to have no political line, Whig or Tory. Our mission is chiefly to the poor. As to politics, no Methodist minister must interfere with, or be interfered with, by any of his brethren. It is so in the Established Church of England and of Scotland; it should be so in our own voluntary Church. I am jealous for the high spiritual character of Methodism. Every step we take towards politics reduces our character for high spirituality; thereby some are alienated from us by our political tone."

Mr. Reece: "Many of our people, wishing to do right in political matters, are wanting *direction*; and to whom should they look but to the President and to the men in London, who are wiser than we are?"

This was a shrewd hit. Father Reece did not feel one whit less wise for being an ex-President instead of a President; or find less intellectual ozone exhalng from the bridgeless Humber than from the many-bridged and not quite smokeless Thames.

Mr. Dixon: "Dr. Beaumont only imputes *error in judgment* to the late President in this one instance, not any political  *motive*, but what had behind it a political *effect*."



Dr. Bunting: "I hope that Dr. Beaumont will withdraw his reservation and lift up both hands."

Mr. Galland: "I would have the thanks couched in general terms." Thanks were voted *nem. con.*

Mr. Jackson: "I never thought myself competent to the duties of the chair, and view with devout astonishment my having been enabled to fulfil them to the satisfaction of my brethren. I have received great benefit from writing the Centenary volume. I have had daily communion with the spirits of just men made perfect. I have had a glorious year; I never felt a year so short. It has been full of labour, but the labour has been rest."

It is very interesting to read the little notices of the men received on trial. Philip Fowler was objected to on the ground of his age—twenty-six years.

Dr. Bunting: "I am against setting up an abstract principle. I do not know that God will not call a man at twenty-six years of age."

It is instructive to notice how the fine young men who entered the Theological Institution in the Centenary year fulfilled the prophecies that went before them. Dr. Beaumont heard Henry Young preach at the District meeting, and gave a very high character of his sermon. Luke Wiseman, "an *extraordinary* young man." G. C. Harvard, "strongly recommended." John and Joseph Gostick, John S. Jones, George Perks, "excellent natural abilities and exceptional acquirements." John Bowman; John Kirk, "recommended from Hull by Reece"; and S. R. Hall. With regard to John Kirk, Dr. Bunting reintroduced the question of proposing members for admission at the leaders' meeting. Mr. Dixon, who as Superintendent of Sheffield West recommended a candidate for the ministry, stated in his character that he had left the New Connexion because he was tired of the despotism of liberalism, and the practice so strongly objected to seems to have still obtained in Hull, in spite of Mr. Reece's quiet efforts to induce its discontinuance.

Dr. Bunting observed: "The Kilhamite practice of proposing members at the leaders' meeting is one of our abominations." And, commenting on Kirk's character, who appears to have been so admitted, Dr. Bunting said of and to Mr. Reece: "*Influence is a trust*, and in nothing more so than in regard to age and character. I am taking a liberty, I know, but I *dare* not do so with young men. I hope that if Mr. Reece go back to Hull he will *finish* this abomination."

Richard Reece had to take this uncharged for lecture as best he could. But its secondhand delivery to the most

*influential* Methodist layman of Hull, both in regard to age and character (Mr. Henwood), was as unimportant as the flutter of a flag. The only man who could restrain the tide of Mr. Henwood's great influence was one Joseph Fowler. And how was this accomplished? Answer, by one who watched the process: By the influence of *mutual respect*.

This same question was put with regard to another "*highly recommended*" neophyte, by Joseph Cusworth. Is it not the practice to read the names of members for admission at the Lincoln leaders' meeting? and whether this young man had been distinctly instructed on the subject? Among these promising and performing candidates are Dr. Bunting's nephew, John Fletcher, John H. Lord, Thomas Vasey, and William Davidson. Of the 121 candidates for our ministry in the Centenary year nine men, having warred a good warfare, still survive—George Barnley, G. A. Page, W. Peck, John H. Lord, John Fletcher, W. L. Bestall, J. Dyson, J. Hearnshaw, and C. Nightingale.

The case of a brother who had been expelled along with Dr. Warren, but was wishful to return, was carefully discussed. Mr. Rigg: "I request that Mr Taylor be allowed to speak."

Dr. Bunting: "Mr. Taylor does not speak by commandment, but as a man." Mr. Newton: "I believe the brother is sincerely sorry."

Mr. Taylor: "The late President advised this brother to lay his case before the Conference. Needing mercy myself, I cannot refuse to hear a man who throws himself upon the mercy of the Conference." Mr. Rigg: "I know that this brother acted in the way which caused expulsion under the direction of another man." Extracts were read from his letter to Mr. Jackson. Some cried out for the order of the day. Mr. S. D. Waddy: "I would not have the appeal so summarily dismissed."

Dr. Bunting: "This brother has done nothing to agitate for three years. I always suspect a man who canvasses the laity. This man has written to a gentleman for his influence. We had better pass to the order of the day. Every man ought to have signed the *Declaration*."

The most remarkable obituary of the year was that of ex-President Gaulter, drawn up by Mr. Atherton and Drs. Beaumont and Bunting. Mr. Grindrod and Mr. Vevers said that Mr. Gaulter was their spiritual father; and Mr. Entwisle said that Mr. Gaulter had spiritual children in every Circuit in which he had laboured. Mr. Stanley told of the benefit he had received in early life from free access to Mr. Gaulter's library.

On the question of character, Thomas Rowland rose at

the mention of his own name, and said he "thought he did not stand well with his brethren." He complained of his appointment.

Dr. Bunting: "Brother Rowland should converse with a few friends before the Stationing Committee."

W. B. was kept another year on trial for having "behaved in an insubordinate way to his Superintendent." It was found that the Superintendent of Newcastle West had left his Circuit to come to Conference without leave from the District meeting.

Dr. Bunting: "I do not think that a Superintendent has any right to come to Conference. He is in the hands of the District as well as others." He was instructed to pack up and pack off at his earliest possible convenience.

The honoured name of Thomas Galland was once more paused at by the Secretary of the Conference under the question of character. The Secretary, Mr. Newton, stood in a unique relation to the subject of his complaint. Mr. Galland was his Superintendent, yet the charge was brought by Mr. Newton as chairman of the District. Again the trouble was about a letter on an ecclesiastical and political subject, published in the *Leeds Mercury*. The Government had brought in a scheme for National Education in England, very much on the same lines as the Irish National System of 1832. The arguments *pro* and *con* in each case were almost identical. The Bill provided that the Bible shall be read and taught in all State-aided schools, but it did not forbid the teaching of the Douay Version to Roman Catholic children. There was, of course, the same diversity of judgment amongst Methodist ministers and people about this Bill as about the other. The view in favour of the principles common to the two Bills, which had been so ably advocated by Watson and by Thomas Jackson, and so determinedly resisted by Dr. Bunting, had their steadfast and convinced adherents. Mr. Jackson, who was now President, called together the united Committees of Education and of Privileges, with a few other ministers. Dr. Bunting drew up a series of resolutions condemnatory of the Bill and the Minutes of Council which embodied the Government scheme, and drew up a form of petition to the House of Commons, to be transmitted to the various Methodist chapels in the land.

Mr. Galland, the Superintendent of the Leeds West Circuit, was convinced that the scheme was the best procurable in the

then condition of the Churches and of public opinion, and that its rejection meant either Secularism on the one hand or, on the other, the handing over to the clergy of the Church of England the State-aided education of the young. Nevertheless, when the petitions came to Mr. Galland as Superintendent of Leeds West, with a request that they might be exposed for signature on the various trust-premises in the Circuit, with exhortation to the congregations to affix their names, Mr. Galland distributed them amongst his colleagues to dispose of them according to the request of the committee. The result was that the Tory papers claimed Mr. Galland, a proclaimed Liberal, as an opponent of the Government proposals, whilst the Whig papers bewailed as loudly the *defection* of a distinguished member of the party. Mr. Galland did not like the situation, so he wrote to the *Leeds Mercury* explaining that his *own name* was not appended to the petition from Oxford Place Chapel or any other, but that he had allowed the petitions to be introduced in deference to a Connexional committee, of which the President was chairman.

Mr. Galland then went on to show how, as in the case of the Bill for the Abolition of Church Rates, a consistent Wesleyan Methodist might take the Government view of the question. His view was substantially the same as that of Dr. Rigg, in his able essay on *Popular Education*.

"On a calm review of the past, we do not believe that history will condemn the action of the Whig Government in this matter. They were pledged to bring in a measure for the education of the lower classes. Such a measure, they saw clearly, could not be based on the High Church theory, which regarded the clergy of the Establishment as of right the educational executive of the nation. There seemed to be no alternative but to endeavour to make direct and definite provision only for secular instruction, and to protect the rights of conscience by securing perfect liberty to the parents to select the school, and to regulate the religious instruction of the child."

But in defending himself against the seeming inconsistency in having allowed petitions against the Bill to be presented for signature on chapel premises of which he had the charge, he had so put his case as to impinge on the susceptibilities of members of the committee, and especially of the drawer up of the resolutions and the form of petition against the measure of the Government. The course taken by Mr. Newton with

regard to his Superintendent comes out in his self-incriminating speech.

Mr. Newton: "I must express my personal respect for Mr. Galland, who has been made specially useful to some members of my family" (he had brought them to religious decision). "But on reaching home (from a round of services in various parts of the kingdom) I was supplied with the *Mercury*. I was very much grieved; and had a meeting at Leeds of gentlemen, who, with one exception, were of one mind in disapproving of Mr. Galland's letter."

It is impossible not to stand and admire the *naïveté* of the Secretary of the Conference in thus incidentally and self-approvingly bringing forth against himself a charge of insubordination against his Superintendent far more flagrant than that for which young Bedford and young Rossell had been so condignly rebuked at the preceding Conference. He had coolly called a "meeting" of *laymen* to consider and to pronounce upon, and, with one exception, to condemn, the action of his Superintendent. In this instance the letter complained of was allowed to be read to the Conference, but not, as it surely ought to have been, by the proper official, and in the first instance without note or comment. It was handed over to the elocution of Dr. Bunting, who, in his own style of forensic eloquence, enlarged upon the great blameworthiness of each successive paragraph. He objected to Mr. Galland's informing the public that in allowing the petitions against the Government Bill, he had acted under *instructions* and not upon his own judgment. Dr. Bunting proceeded: "I object to language which implies that we think that the Minutes ought to be burnt by the common hangman. We *do think* it deserves it, but we don't talk so to the House of Commons." Dr. B. admitted that Mr. Galland had not in the least misrepresented what he and the committee avowedly thought of the scheme, and Mr. Galland never hinted that they talked so in the petition to the House of Commons. Dr. B. next interpreted the declaration of loyalty on the part of the supporters of the scheme into a denial of the loyalty of its opposers. "Above all," he added, "we think it an imputation that Methodism can possibly be made a dangerous political engine, and obstructive to the action of the Government." Mr. Galland had intimated that should Methodism ever come under the predominating influence of either party in the State, it would not only lose its own proper character and be diverted

from its own mission as a spiritual agency, but by reason of its compactness, coherence, and ever-growing strength, it might become a formidable antagonist to an Administration which was endeavouring to carry out a measure called for by the needs and the voice of the nation.

Dr. Bunting next complained of Mr. Galland's talking of official men as using tact. He had, indeed, recognised that quality in the drawing up of the resolution and petition. He was next charged with having even gone so far as to describe the drawer up of the petition as "the author of the manifesto." Whether the designation "author" be less honourable than that of drawer up might be a matter for individual taste; but the style and composition of the form of petition were much more like those of a "manifesto" than those of a memorial.

Mr. Galland, finding that his letter had displeased his admirable colleague, had written to the *Mercury* an explanatory and apologetic letter. This also Dr. Bunting read; but as it stopped short of retraction and of recantation, it did not satisfy its commentator.

Mr. Galland's next accuser was Mr. ex-President Jackson. Extremely sensitive for a public man, he was especially uneasy on this question, inasmuch as the principles of the Bill condemned by the committee, of which he was the chairman, were essentially the same as those of a former Government Bill for the advocacy of which he and Richard Watson had received full forty stripes in Conference eight years before. He now exclaimed:

"A great principle is involved in this matter. Mr. Galland has reflected on the President (himself now ex-) and the committee. I ask whether any preacher has a right to do that? Mr. Galland does not impute corrupt motives to the committee, but what he says may lead others to do so."

Mr. Galland: "I am too unwell at present to go into this business until the case is properly prepared, so that I may clearly know wherein I am supposed to have offended. Let the objections to what I have done be simply and fully stated. I will endeavour to respectfully and affectionately supply all the needed information."

It was decided to allow the objectors time for the preparation of their case.

\* On the resumption of the case, Dr. Dixon said: "As this business is closely connected with the minutes of the London committee, I propose that those minutes should be read first."

Mr. Joseph Fowler: "I think that would confuse the issue and complicate

the question of the rightness or wrongness of Mr. Galland's action with the much larger question of the future action of the Conference with regard to national education."

The fairness of this observation was at once felt by Conference. The case against Mr. Galland was put by Mr. Keeling, to whom the task seems to have been deputed. It made the parties to the question to be—the two combined Connexional committees in London for the one part and Mr. Galland for the other. The committees appointed in London possess rights and privileges which individual ministers have not. Is it right to appear in a newspaper against constituted authorities? We have no such right. If each were to claim and use this right, what would be the consequence?

It will be seen at once that this was a very grave issue, involving a constitutional question of no slight importance. It came to this: "There's a divinity doth hedge" a London committee that makes whatever document it issues sacred from discussion by a Methodist minister through the public Press. This was carried to such an extent that a minister was not allowed to defend himself from newspaper misrepresentation and public misconception if self-explanation and self-defence involved the expression of an opinion diverse from that of a partly extemporised London committee. Mr. Galland had never set himself against the action of the Committee in issuing petitions adverse to his own views.

Mr. Galland: "I must ask leave to notice some preliminary personal matters in order to set myself right with my brethren. I am thought to be political. I have decided views, but in my ministerial and pastoral duties I have never meddled with politics. I am charged with hostility to the Established Church; and it is said that I was on that account denied the degree of LL.D. at Cambridge."

He then explained that he had himself abandoned the purpose of taking that degree in deference to his father's wishes, who at *first* intended him to take up his own profession of the law, but changed his mind, and had chosen for him a different career. At this point Mr. Fowler was called out of Conference by a deputation from Hull. On his return, he found Mr. Galland still upon his feet, and resumed his Journal.

Mr. Galland: "I thought that I was bound to set myself right with the public when I found myself misrepresented publicly as an opponent of the

Government scheme, whilst in reality I was grieved to think that the Wesleyan Methodist body had, by misapplied ingenuity, been led to obstruct the Government in its honest efforts to supply a universally confessed need of a Christian population. I thought that my letter would render service to Methodism."

He here read a letter addressed to him by a beneficed clergyman to show that his own letter was not viewed even by the clergy in the light in which so many of his brethren viewed it.

Mr. G. then proceeded to answer objections to his letter: "I did not impute low motives to the opposite party. I am surprised that anyone should imply that I did. Such motives could be imputed to such men by those only who did not know them so well as I do. I felt great pleasure in admitting the fact that the preachers now in London are men of unquestionable loyalty. But by the eagerness of party feeling they may be betrayed into errors which they may hereafter see reason to regret. I rejoice in the immense power for national good which belongs to our Connexion; but I calmly deprecate any movement which may be called forth by one party in Methodism to embarrass the Government when the other party is in office. I am actuated by no lurking disloyalty towards, or distrust of, the powers that be in Methodism. I appeal to my past conduct as evidence against the charge of my not treating the Conference with respect. I do not think that anyone but myself was implicated by my letter. My colleague Mr. Newton's letter intimates that I sacrifice principle to party."

Dr. Bunting interrupted: "*Our* objection is that Mr. Galland wrote as if we had regarded the Privy Council as fools. We do deplore their incapacity."

Mr. Galland resumed by reading the report of a public speech by Dr. Bunting, in which he calls the Government plan "ineffably absurd, and quite impracticable." He resumed, "I admit that some words in my letter are not happily chosen, but for the Conference I have nothing but respect."

Mr. Rattenbury (Mr. Galland's junior colleague) said: "Mr. Galland, considering his predilections, has made great concessions, and displayed great moderation in this affair. He did not prevent petitions against the Government Bill being sent from the Leeds West Circuit."

Mr. Galland: "I now think that what I did was unconnexional. I would not do so on any like occasion in the future. In any future Connexional movement of the kind I will, even if Superintendent, give up to my colleagues, and submit in silence and, as far as possible, with concurrence. Resolve what you will about my conduct, I shall still say, and still feel: 'Here my best friends and kindred dwell. Here God, my Saviour, reigns.' Mr. Galland seemed deeply affected.

"Blessed are the meek, for they shall inherit the earth. Blessed are the peacemakers, for they shall be called the children of God." The scene was described by those who witnessed it as very touching, and as, above all, very edifying. The self-repression, the all but self-effacement of a scholar and a gentleman, a first-class preacher and a noble, manly character, and the submissiveness of a lofty, independent nature, were subduing and



constraining. It was seen how easily he might have carried the war into the opposite camp, by a counter-charge against his accuser for calling together a meeting of laymen to consider and pronounce upon his Superintendent's action ; and in adducing their judgment as incriminating evidence against the authority to which he himself was far more directly bound to adjust his own conduct than to that of any committee whatever, or of any document drawn up by them.

Mr. Dixon : " I am more anxious to defend the Committee than to make any remarks on Mr. Galland. I wish, however, to imitate his moderation. The spirit of his explanation is most satisfactory. He is not a political agitator. He thinks that we are under political bias, but vindicates himself from it. I believe that *he is under political influence*. The committee were of different politics : Whigs and Tories. If the Government retire from the Protestantism of this country, may we not interfere ? Mr. Galland thinks with me on the question of Popery, but differs as to the mode of dealing with it. What means the introduction of the Popish Scriptures into State-aided Schools, except to corrupt ? My politics are undying attachment to the Constitution ; I think that the political power of the Methodist body may be dangerous, but am sorry that allusion was made to it. I should be sorry if we could fraternise with Chartists. But there is also danger from Popery. Let it proceed, and our liberties are gone. It may become an antagonistic power in politics little felt a century ago. As to Mr. Galland, let the Conference meet him in the spirit that he has manifested." The speech was loudly cheered.

Mr. Vevers : " The London committee either did right or did wrong. If right, it ought to be supported, and Mr. Galland did wrong in writing his letter. Yet I know that Mr. Galland is strongly opposed to Popery. I have, and do, and always will support the London committee. I would have Mr. Galland met in the same spirit which he has manifested."

This speech was amusingly characteristic. Mr. Vevers always began an argument with " either is, or it was not," insomuch that we youngsters called it " The Veverian dilemma."

Mr. Atherton : " I think that some would not oppose Popery and Socinianism, lest that should injure an Administration."

Mr. Galland : " I would not support a Cabinet of angels if they favoured either Popery or Unitarianism."

Dr. Bunting : " I would wish, if possible, to perfect Mr. Galland's explanations. We offer him some thoughts. Mr. Galland does not wish to attack the London committee, or differ from his brethren, but his principles will not let him be quiet. I daresay he does not see this. The London committee acted with great caution. I do not say that Mr. Galland ought to have made himself *prominent* in the matter on our side. I was in the House when the Leeds West petition in favour was presented.\* It contained very

\* It must be here noted that after the petition against the Bill had been sent by Wesleyan Methodists, a petition in its favour had been sent by those Leeds West Methodists who thought it the best that had any probability of passing.

objectionable passages. We are, as a body, Conservative. Let a man keep his principles to himself. If the few oppose the many, they are bound to make a Scriptural defence of their conduct. I think Mr. Galland has not rendered to the friends of the Administration such service as he supposes. They will not think so well of us to find that we are not united. To many others he has done as great dis-service. The number of Methodist signatures against the Government plan amounts to 126,595. I think Mr. Galland had a right to be silent. I do not wish him to sign a petition against the Bill. But he should be quiet. With respect to motives, I think a little more explanation on that point is necessary. Mr. Galland complains of the 'celerity' of our movements, of want of time for the Connexion to think the matter out. Whose fault was this? Not ours. Lord J. Russell, to the astonishment of everyone, just before the Whitsuntide holidays, gave notice of moving for the grant. I believe he was sorry for it. But he was acting under a coalition of O'Connell and Home Papists, etc., not to say infidels. He made the ballot an open question to satisfy one party; and the education question to satisfy the other. I think we must have some further explanation; some reason with respect to the writing of the letter. I would have it done mildly."

Dr. Beaumont: "I do not agree with Mr. Dixon. Were petitions not sent down in favour of the measure for withdrawing the Government patronage of idolatry in India as well as against the Douay Bible in Roman Catholic schools? We should be consistent in these matters. I think New Testament politics should restrain us from bringing the Government into contempt by calling their measures 'ineffably absurd.' I wish the committee had shown the moderation shown by the Archbishop of Canterbury. I think it wrong to charge the Administration with doing everything we disapprove of from a party motive. Many think otherwise. I think others, besides Mr. Galland, might profitably make concessions. I hope, at any rate, that the matter will be settled amicably, so that the fellowship of the body and the integrity of Methodism may be preserved for at least another Centenary celebration."

Mr Entwisle: "I am neither Whig nor Tory. I take my sentiments from the New Testament. I ask whether it is right to oppose committees. The Committee of Privileges want your protection, and they ought to have it."

Mr. James Smetham (father of the painter-poet) maintained that it was gratuitous to charge the Government with merely party motives, since there were many practical points of view from which a patriotic statesman might think the scheme the safest and the best attainable at present. He proceeded to instance some of these considerations, but was told that his remarks were irrelevant. To his dying day he could never make out how the imputation of unworthy motives to the Government could be relevant, yet their defence against such imputation inadmissible.

Dr. Bunting: "I propose that the Conference is satisfied with the concessions and admissions made by Mr. Galland, and with his declaration

that he will refrain from prosecuting the question any further." Mr. Galland's concessions were most cordially received by the Conference. He said: "I have no objection to that resolution if you don't print it in the Minutes nor send it to the *Watchman*."

Mr. Dixon then read some very stringent and lengthy resolutions on the Government scheme, which he purposed to propose. Mr. Joshua Wade: "I think it inconsistent to oppose Popery now, in brethren who would not oppose Roman Catholic Emancipation, and have not opposed the annual grant to Maynooth."

Dr. Bunting: "Before this year it was not proposed to grant State money for the support of Popery in England. I move that the resolutions of the committee be laid before the Conference, with the exception of that respecting the Council." It was resolved that they should be referred to a committee to make the needed modifications and omissions. The President said: "As the omissions and the alterations are made on Dr. Beaumont's suggestion, let him be on the committee."

Dr. Bunting: "*No! We cannot have an opponent in preparation of our plan.*"

Dr. Bunting's *No!* round, short, straight, smashing, overbore the wise, conciliatory judgment of the President. Dr. Beaumont was, as a London minister, a member of the committee, yet was not allowed to assist in the emendations to be made on his suggestion. Dr. Bunting and three others constituted the Emendation Committee.

Three resolutions were proposed to Conference condemnatory of the Government plan, and justifying the action of the committee. Dr. Bunting explained them.

Mr. Galland: "I think it wrong to charge the Government with '*teaching Popery and promoting infidelity.*' I do not think the Minutes of the Privy Council deserve that imputation. I cannot say that permission to read the Popish version of the Scriptures in Roman Catholic schools is declaring it of equal value with the Authorised Version. Many years ago the University of Oxford declared that, next to our own, it is the best version in existence. I cannot affirm that a Bill which makes the Christian religion and the Bible the basis of all instruction is promotive of infidelity. I do not see how it can 'promote infidelity' to have Socialists' children taught the Holy Scriptures. They have no pastor to teach them. On this point, at any rate, the scheme is a barrier against infidelity. With respect to violating the principles of the British Constitution, how does this Bill go beyond what Tory Ministers have done? Witness the Roman Catholic Emancipation Bill (which Dr. Bunting had advocated). Grants to Roman Catholics were made under Pitt's administration. In these times of disorganisation the existing Government should not be blamed either without cause or beyond their *clear* blame-worthiness. Many of our people are much dissatisfied with this way of wielding our power in the field of politics. On the question of Lord Sidmouth's Bill and slavery, the Methodists, as a people, were united. It is not so in this case; I believe that the Government proposition for a

normal training school was defeated chiefly through the published proceedings of our London committee and the petitions which they advised. I believe that if you record these resolutions in the Minutes you will weaken the influence of Conference on our societies. If these resolutions are put without a modification of the language I complain of, with unflinching loyalty to this body, I cannot give them even a tacit assent, and my duty will not require me to be present at the voting."

Dr. Bunting: "Mr. Galland says that in former movements, in our Parliamentary matters, our people have been with us. Yes; but who led them? I was then Editor of the *Magazine*. I deny that they are against us now. The Church of England, high and low, are with us; excepting here and there a solitary clergyman or Bishop, who owes his preferment to the present Ministry. Our people generally are with us. But we are sometimes to lead our people. I object to the doctrine that if a thing is unpopular we are not to do it. I believe that our usefulness is not narrowed. In Lord Sidmouth's Bill it was county justices we had to deal with; here it is the Commissioners; the one affects adults, the other children. We will not accept support from such a Ministry, and no other Ministry would have proposed this measure. In reference to West India affairs, Lord Glenelg gave us money on condition that we carried out our Wesleyan principles. He said the same to the Church, the Baptists, etc. Some part of Mr. Galland's remarks is a copy of O'Connell's speech, or else an odd coincidence." Mr. Galland, being appealed to by Dr. Bunting's look and tone, assured the Conference that he "did not owe to Dan O'Connell any one of his ideas on the subject."

Dr. Bunting: "Then it is an odd coincidence, and shows that Mr. Galland keeps the same company as Mr. O'Connell. I am sorry that a brother of Mr. Galland's respectability says what he has said. I think he does encourage Popery. Popish chaplains are to be employed; does not this encourage Popery? I believe the country is in our favour. Our Methodist documents are *conservative* (to coin a word) of the principle of liberty against the ridiculous pretensions of the High Church party. I would object to any version of the Scriptures but one in the schools. But all this springs from Liberalism. While Mr. Galland holds this I cannot see how we can agree. There is O'Connellism, again. I am against schools being established by the State. Let every denomination educate its own children. Mr. Galland said these were to be *religious* schools, because the Scriptures are to be read. If that be sufficient for children, why not for adults? Why does Mr. Galland preach? The instruction provided in these schools is said to be religious instruction. That I deny. I defend my own expression. The distinction between general instruction and special religious instruction is *ineffably absurd*. No man was ever converted by this general instruction. What right have we to separate what God has joined together? What right have we to think that education sufficient for the poor which is not sufficient for our own children? Popish priests can attend from three to four o'clock, but what other ministry can? And Popish priests are not married; they may do it. They have no itinerancy, no leaders' meetings. This system was *smuggled* into the Colonies. Mr. Galland attacked the Duke of Wellington and Sir R. Peel when they brought in the Roman Catholic Relief Bill. He did not then say anything about what Pitt had done."

Mr. Entwisle followed Dr. Bunting: "I am sorry to hear a Methodist Preacher say anything in favour of Popery." This remark was not entertained. Mr. E. had mistaken Mr. G.

Mr. Galland was heard in explanation. "He had merely quoted the Oxonian opinion that, 'next to the A.V., the Douay version of the Scriptures was the best.'"

Mr. Rowland attempted to speak, but so loosely that the President said: "It is difficult to obtain a hearing for remarks that are not relevant."

Finding that the resolutions were about to be put without modification of the expressions which he thought unwarranted, Mr. Galland quietly withdrew, feeling unable to vote for them and unwilling to put himself any further into seeming opposition to the conclusions of the Conference.

It seems impossible not to appreciate the arguments, and especially to respect the aims, of *both* parties in this significant debate. It is plain that Dr. Bunting and his followers were actuated by a sincere, intelligent, and healthy dread of the encroachments and the blandishments of Popery on the one hand and Latitudinarianism on the other. This dread has been all too much justified by the portentous successes of both the one and the other during the eight-and-fifty intervening years. The Episcopalian and the Wesleyan point of view was admirably marked by Sir J. Kay-Shuttleworth, the fair-minded and judicious statesman under whose guidance the Government drew up the Minutes of Council. He remarked that these communities regarded the school as "*the nursery of the congregation*, in which the children and youth were to be trained not *simply* in the rudiments of Biblical and catechetical knowledge."

The other side took also a very practical point of view. They saw that the Government plan was, at that date, Hobson's choice; that if it were defeated the whole question must be indefinitely deferred. And this was what took place. The Ministry could not face the disapproval of the two most powerful religious bodies in the land—the Established Church and the Wesleyan Methodist Conference. The main part of the scheme was dropped. Not that there was a near approach to unanimity on the subject in our own Church. The Government had strong and warm supporters. The only time I ever witnessed the interruption of a Wesleyan Methodist minister in the pulpit by a Methodist seatholder in his family pew, was in connection with the announcing and appealing for a petition against this Bill, in a large Circuit town chapel at the close of the Sunday evening service. The minister's putting

of the case was controverted by a member of his flock. The effect of this unseemly altercation was most unedifying and most unsabbatic ; it gave a rude and wasteful kick to a good warm pailful of the sincere milk of the Word.

No doubt the political proclivities and antipathies of the worthy Methodists of both colours more or less unconsciously influenced their views of the merits or demerits of the measure. Dr. Bunting made a frank avowal of his own. His allusion to O'Connell, and to his own presence in the House of Commons at the presentation of the petition of Leeds Methodists in favour of the Bill, recalls a rather comic incident. The Popish demagogue and the Methodist leader seldom came upon the stage together, except upon the platform of an anti-slavery meeting. A speech of Dan. O'Connell's created much amusement at the time. I cannot put my hands upon a record of it, but it was to this effect : " The *Wesleyans* oppose the Bill ! This means one, Mr. Jabez Bunting, whose figure has of late become familiar to this House." Then, turning towards the Speaker's Gallery, " You may recognise him and his attendants by their big, stiff neckcloths," with more of his rough caricature.

It must not be supposed that it cost Mr. Galland no self-conflict to submit so meekly as he did. At this time it was my great privilege to see a good deal of this Christian gentleman and scholar. I dined with him not infrequently, and heard him discuss the question with some of the most capable and best informed members of the Conference. I vividly recall a dinner-table dialogue between him and Philip Garrett, in which I thought the mathematician got, for once, the better of the classic. It seemed to me then, and it does still, that Mr. Galland underrated the menace to religious liberty and Gospel truth involved in the pretensions of the Papacy. But what tried him was the feeling of unfairness in the unrestricted license allowed to the opponents of the Government, and the strict and stern repression of its adherents and supporters. The only time I ever saw the slightest perturbation in his genial, re-collected spirit was when, in course of table talk, someone asked him what he thought of the pamphlet lecture against the Government scheme which had just been published by a distinguished Methodist minister. He replied : " I was brought to a strict account for a letter in a newspaper on the subject, which was distinctly not forbidden by the Conference ; but Brother — is commended for lecturing on

the subject in a Methodist chapel and publishing his lecture in a pamphlet form, which the Conference has forbidden on any question of Church politics."

A most cheering increase was reported: 10,267, with 20,000 odd on trial; "so hallowed and so gracious was the time."

The theological examination of "the young men" was again made a most important part of Conference proceedings. The Centenary year, the era of recurrence to first principles, was not likely to be marked by any slackened interest in the doctrines which had been seen and felt to be the vital force of Methodism. Dr. Hannah noticed the discrepancy in some of the statements of the candidates, especially in relation to the transmission of guilt.

Dr. Bunting: "The depravity results from the guilt."

The President required a distinct definition of each doctrine from each brother; and Dr. Hannah "gave a statement" as to their "experience" and his own satisfaction with the clearness and convincingness of the answers. Mr. Fowler evidently regarded the theological examination as one of the most *interesting* portions of the Conference business.

Mr. Bromley expressed by letter his dissent from the rule which allowed inquiry into the character of a brother without previous notice.

Dr. Bunting: "It is not the thing that a brother should repeatedly object. Though he may not approve, he must acquiesce." The resolution of last year on Mr. Bromley's case is to be sent to him. Brother —, whose case was referred to a committee at the last Conference, declared most unequivocally his belief in our doctrines, as contained in our standards.

When the name of Brother — was read, the Chairman of his District answered "No." A brother rose and said he had addressed a letter to the Chairman containing matter of accusation. The Chairman replied that he had not had time to read the brother's letter. A somewhat extraordinary circumstance. Referred to a committee. An admonitory letter was sent to a brother who was convicted by his District Meeting of "insubordination to his Superintendent, and being inclined to mental indolence."

Mr. Burdsall moved "That the sermon preached by Mr. Lomas should be printed."

Dr. Bunting: "I think that, as it was a doctrinal sermon not preached before the Conference, we should be careful in inviting its publication."

Mr. Lomas: "I am glad that Dr. Bunting has extricated me out of the difficulty. Had I known that my audience would be so distinguished, I should not have had the temerity to preach; much less have I now to print the sermon. I beg Mr. Burdsall to withdraw his request." He did so.

An interesting debate took place on the division of the Hull Circuit.

Mr. Reece: "The District Meeting said 'No,' but the June Quarterly Meeting decided on a division, and agreed to a boundary line."

At J. Fowler's request the Minutes of the meeting were read. The President called on me, but I referred to Mr. Reece, who remained silent.

Dr. Bunting: "It is well known that there is a division of judgment on the matter. We should hear from the Preachers in a manly manner."

Mr. Reece referred to the various doings and undoings in the matter by the Quarterly Meeting. J. F. addressed the Conference.

Mr. Duncan: "There are 3,000 members in Hull. We are obliged to build a new chapel, there being a large number of applicants for sittings who cannot be supplied. I believe the new chapel will not be erected till the Circuit is divided. If the Circuit be not divided, you will put the friends of Methodism under the feet of one person not very friendly to the Conference."

Mr. Ranson: "I cannot cordially consent to the too personal sentiments of Mr. Duncan. The facts are these: Three ministers are in favour of division; two against it. The people want it, and will be restless till they get it. But the division will offend some of the best friends of Methodism."

Mr. Reece: "I was sorry to hear Mr. Duncan's disparaging remarks. My colleague's threat of not going back to the Circuit if not divided does not weigh with me. Give me a right man who will stand by his Superintendent, and I do not fear going back."

Dr. Bunting: "I hope I shall speak as a judge. I think the Stewards did wrong in not consulting Mr. Reece sooner, and in treating him as a mere Chairman of the Quarterly Meeting. I think it time for the collective pastorate to interfere. A great principle is involved. I differed from the Conference on the Stockport question; but in Hull there are 3,000 members. I differ from Mr. Reece with great diffidence; but how can any man, however ably supported, superintend 3,000 members? If my venerable friend will forgive me, I will propose that the Hull Circuit be immediately divided."

The Secretary: "If I were one of Mr. Reece's colleagues, I should propose the postponement of the division for another year." J. F. explained to the Conference why he could not make that proposition. The Hull division was carried unanimously.

When in reaching the stations Dr. Bunting's name was reached, he rose and said: "I complain of the annual annoyance to which Connexional officers are subject. I wish the Conference to say whether the offices are to be abolished or not. If not, let men occupy them without being badgered. I have felt it a tax upon my time, and must protest against it."

Dr. Beaumont: "I have never objected to the office. But I think that so long as a Methodist Preacher is physically capable he should preach at least once every Sunday."

Dr. Bunting: "I know I can't preach, or speak either, as I used to do; but that is because I am so taken up with the Mission House."

Dr. Beaumont: "I never hinted that Dr. Bunting could not preach and speak as well as ever."

The fact is that at this time Dr. Bunting was haunted by an almost morbid feeling that his pristine power of public speaking was beginning to decline. The sustained impetus of his youthful oratory might well be somewhat slackening after well nigh half



a century's expenditure ; but his matter was as weighty as it ever was, and his manner was still vigorous and manful to a very effective degree, and had gained as much in calm, impressive dignity as it might have lost in youthful impetus. In truth, it was the prestige of his popularity that hampered him. Strangers pressed to hear him with vast and vague anticipations, according to their own ideal of what a pulpit orator was like, and were often taken quite aback by his absolute simplicity of language and the total absence of pyrotechnic brilliance and of fiery, flaming rhetoric. What really had begun to fail was the conscious power to make fresh sermons as strong as those which had earned him the exacting reputation of being one of the very greatest, if not, as many able judges thought, the very greatest preacher of his time.

Mr. Beecham expressed himself with great propriety and modesty. Many cried, "Go on."

The President: "If we go on, it must be with the understanding that there shall be no more complaining." A discussion followed on the President's removal from Bristol to London. Dr. Bunting: "I do not mean to say that it is *indispensable* for the President to live in London, but it is extremely desirable. I hope the time will come when we shall have a house for the President in London." The state of a brother's health being mentioned in connection with the stations, Dr. Bunting said: "He has only got the August influenza." A brother had been engaged to one Circuit, but put down for another, because his circumstances rendered his appointment to the latter indispensable, but now expressed his willingness to go elsewhere. It was asked, Why could he not as well go to the Circuit to which he had been pledged at first?

Dr. Bunting answered: "Because they do not wish to have him now, in consequence of the manner in which he has behaved to them. I am glad the Circuits are resenting this whissy-washy conduct." But the brother made out a good case.

Dr. Bunting: "I complain of Mr. Burton's being poached from the mission list."

The President: "I have received a letter from Mr. Bromley."

Dr. Bunting: "I object to the reading of that letter. It is contrary to rule."

Mr. Reece: "There will be no difficulty with Mr. B. if the Chairman be firm and the brethren united." The committee appointed to converse with Mr. Rowland touching his complaint that his appointment showed that he was not so cordially respected by the brethren as aforesaid brought in their report: "Brother R. promises amendment."

Mr. Newton: "I hope Brother R. is not keeping up the habit of calling himself the People's man, and talking about the gentlemen on this platform."

Dr. Bunting: "These are not the times for us to talk thus. I would,

however, have the affair terminated as pleasantly as we can do." It was pleaded that though he had not co-operated with his Superintendent in opposing the Government Education Bill, yet he had not publicly taken the other side.

In connection with an appointment to Western Africa, Dr. Bunting uttered a sentiment worthy of being remembered among the oracles of Methodism. "A missionary ought to be willing to live anyhow, and die anywhere."

"The Sheffield school" again demanded the attention of the Conference.

Mr. Dixon: "I propose that the Sheffield school be under the direction of the Conference, and that Mr. McLean should receive his appointment from the Conference. I think a sort of independent Methodism will spring up, which I should greatly deprecate. I move Mr. McLean's appointment." Mr. S. D. Waddy seconded.

Dr. Bunting: "I feel an objection I cannot get over. We have not the appointment of masters or committee, nor ought to have. If the experiment succeed, others will follow, and we shall be bound to help. I feel something about Mr. McLean; but for the school, he would take a Circuit. In looking at the school I find the *élite* of our society. I am not sure but that we should do a wise thing to take it under our care religiously. I should be glad to get rid of the first objection, and to meet the second." Mr. Dixon: "I wish we had more schools, and Preachers appointed to them. I believe that Mr. McLean is doing more than he could in any other situation. I wish for the school a more Connexional union." Dr. Beaumont: "I think we cannot do better than go on as we are." Mr. Lord: "We have no cause to be ashamed. I wish we had many such schools." Mr. Scott advocated the appointment of a chaplain. Mr. Dixon by advice withdrew his motion. Mr. Newton called attention to a circular which has been diffused, speaking of the undue influence of a particular Preacher. The speech was received in silence.

The Book Steward reported that the sales for the year had increased by £6,000, and the capital increased by £5,377.

Remarks were made on the singing at Brunswick Chapel, Leeds complaining of improper tunes, and giving out four lines instead of two. Mr. Burdsall: "I think the singing is too slow."

Dr. Bunting: "I think that is somewhat a matter of opinion. I think we are in danger of irreverent singing. These galloping tunes are bad. It is a great scandal to have persons conducting our singing who are not religious. I would insist on good men to conduct our singing, as well as to read prayers."

Another wise and weighty axiom. Dr. Bunting knew of a deplorable case in point in the leading singer of a famous

London chapel, with a fine round, sonorous voice, but with very unreligious tastes and habits. As to *galloping* tunes, the singing pew in our smaller chapels was too often turned into a circus for grotesque performances. But, except at a revival prayer-meeting, one could not imagine such a thing in Brunswick, Leeds.

Allusion was made to a lawsuit; a Preacher was being prosecuted for falsehood. It is suggested the Committee of Privileges should take up the case.

Dr. Bunting: "The Scripture cannot be broken. It is better sometimes to put up with a little wrong. 'If a man smite thee on the one cheek, turn to him the other also.' Who can foresee the consequences of mooted questions in a court of law?" Mr. Reece stated a case of aggravated persecution in the Newbury Circuit. Parsons in Berkshire refuse to bury children who are not baptised by themselves.

Dr. Bunting: "I think we should bear rotten eggs. If we can get relief easily, let us do so. But we must bear a little."

A rather spirited conversation on the Marriage Bill took place.

Dr. Bunting assumed that there was a "joint understanding that the Preachers would not perform the marriage ceremony." The brethren could not recollect any such understanding.

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It was objected that the Pastoral Address was too long.

Dr. Bunting: "Perhaps too long for the writer, taxing his health, his time, and privileges; not too long for the people in the closet, and for our families; and if not listened to by us to the end with great pleasure, it is our own fault." Mr. Galland: "I think there are some sentiments to which the Conference should not give official sanction. The Address Mr. Watson published in the Magazine expressed sentiments opposed to those in this Address. I am sorry to dissent."

Dr. Bunting: "I think that Mr. Galland has been treated generously; he should not repeat his dissent but his acquiescence. I deny most solemnly that the Conference has given even a qualified, modified sanction to the views of Mr. Watson. The very next Conference disavowed the view of that dear and honoured individual. He had no authority given to him to state those sentiments. I do regret that in an hour of physical weakness he issued those sentiments." (About the first national system of education.) "If he were here now, I have no doubt he would concur heartily with us." The Address passed unaltered.

The Conference of the Centenary year did not prove so conducive to the oneness of the Body as was reasonably hoped. Many matters were observable which tended rather to sunder than to solder the diverse elements of which so large a body of strong-minded men was sure to be composed. Amongst these have been noted the attempt to fix a Connexional discredit and

a Conferential disability on the very best of the brethren who declined to put their signatures to an unauthorised document put forth by the *London Preachers*, which would commit them to a statement, as to matter of fact, of the accuracy of which a true and loyal man might fairly entertain a doubt, by making all non-signers ineligible to the Legal Conference. This was followed by the setting up a claim on behalf of "the committees appointed in London," to be "constituted authorities," whose judgment on Parliamentary proceedings bearing on religious questions was binding on each individual minister in such wise that, however strongly he might dissent in a judgment from the London view of the impending matter, he was bound to abstain religiously from any published exposition or expression of his views; his only right being to take no public part either for or against his own convictions; but to be silent and "keep his principles to himself."

This was carried to such an extent that even a member of the minority in the London Committee, who had made good in Conference his objection to certain expressions in the resolutions to be printed in the Minutes, reflecting on the motives of the Government, was not allowed to be put upon the committee for emending those expressions; although the President himself had pointed out the propriety of that appointment. Then came Dr. Bunting's protest against any of the officials, at least of the Mission House or of the Institution, being troubled—as he phrased it, "badgered"—with any animadversion upon any act of their administration. He had, indeed, repeatedly resisted all such interrogation himself, but this was the first time that he had drawn the protective cordon round his colleagues also. This was in the face of his own judicious and most accurate delimitation of the responsibility of the officials of the Book Room in the case of Mr. Jackson and of Mr. Mason.

The exact point of the proceedings chosen for this demonstration made it all the more significant. It was naturally asked, Why was this brought out on the reading of the *stations*, and on the occurrence of his own name, and not under either of the departments of which he was the head? He had not been called in question as to any one of his official acts. The names of the two Editors and of the Book Steward had, as usual, been passed in silence. What relevance could there be, then, in the putting forth of this indignant protest by Dr. Bunting on the reading of his *own* name in the *stations*, unless it meant, If you inquire into the

reason or the rightness of any administrative act of mine, you must look out for another Secretary at the Mission House, and another President of the Institution. In what other way could the stations be affected?

Then came the bringing in of a man's bearing with regard to the Government Education Scheme, as affecting the question of the class of Circuit he is fit for, and his appointment to the Superintendency. And then the construing of the non-pronouncement by the preceding Conference on the question of the marriage of Methodist couples by Methodist ministers in Methodist chapels as a "joint understanding" that no brother is to do this, and the thus bringing those "who do such things" under the imputation of unfaithfulness to a fraternal compact.

The inevitable result of all this was most unfortunate. With the exception of the Education Committee, which had already passed under review, the reports of the various departments fell flat upon the Conference. The votes of thanks were moved and passed in the most routine and perfunctory style, without a comment or inquiry. An affair of such importance as the taking of a second house for the Theological Institution, in another part of London, and the consequent appointment of an additional Governor and a Tutor was received in silence: *no one making any remark* (the italics are Mr. Fowler's own) excepting Dr. Bunting, who moved the resolution.

At this period I came into the frankest and most familiar intercourse with many ministers, and with influential laymen not a few. To my great surprise, I found sporadic indications of a restless, almost restive spirit, and a fear of the formation in Methodism of a kind of oligarchic Cabinet, and an autocratic administration. Never had the importance of Dr. Bunting in and to the Conference been more deeply felt or more gladly recognised. Never had he spoken with more wisdom and convincingness. No man needed less than he the assumption of a magisterial tone or attitude, or style of speaking, to add to the native authority of his simple utterance.

#### THE NEWCASTLE CONFERENCE OF 1840.

The first Conference in the second century of Methodism was held at Newcastle, Dr. Newton in the chair. It fell to Mr. Fowler's lot to be the first speaker after the President's inaugural address. As Superintendent of the Circuit in which

the Conference chapel was located, he was commissioned by the Methodist ladies of Newcastle to request the acceptance by the Conference of a robe of office for their President, in token of their appreciation of the honour conferred upon the town by the holding, for the first time, of the Conference therein. Assuredly no one of Nature's noblemen had less need of any dignity of dress than Robert Newton; yet no peer of the realm would set off by his majestic figure the finest raiment of needlework ever fashioned by the deftest and daintiest hand. Father Entwisle treated the affair as a serio-comic interlude. The Rev. T. Powell, the author of the work on "Apostolical Succession" evidently felt that the ladies of Newcastle might have found better employment for their needles in pricking the bladder of Episcopal assumption than in fabricating decorative drapery for a President of Presbyters.

Dr. Bunting: "I am of opinion that a fitting costume rests upon a good principle." He moved, however, not that it be laid upon the table, but the bare, bald "*previous question*."

The next conversation of much interest or significance was that upon the case of a candidate who had "travelled in the New Connexion," and now expressed a wish to travel out of it, "on account of its democracy."

Dr. Bunting suggested that the signing of the Declaration would be the best test of his recantation of all democratic errors. Dr. Beaumont: "I complain of this persistent allusion to the London Declaration of 1834. Dr. Bunting has no right to drag before the Conference, year after year, the brethren whose conscience would not let them sign that document. It had no reference to the New Connexion or democracy. How can a young man, who has never been in Conference, give evidence as to whether or not there is any undue assumption on the part of any members of this body?" Mr. S. Dunn spoke to the same effect.

It came out that a candidate had passed the District Meeting by a majority only.

Dr. Bunting: "Did the young men on trial vote? They have no right to do so." Mr. Galland: "I think they should be allowed to vote for the representative." Dr. Bunting: "With great respect I differ from Mr. Galland."

A brother acquitted by a Minor District Meeting had been retried at the ordinary District Meeting.

Dr. Bunting: "I think this unkind and unfair. The question should not be reopened." Two brethren, colleagues in a delightfully prosperous Circuit, were severely reprehended by the President for "quarrelling, to the serious detriment of their flock."

It seems a funny reminiscence that I took tea and supper with these brethren before and after a missionary meeting some

two months after their co-appointment, and I thought to myself, "Those two good men will never *pull together* at the Gospel plough." It was a pictorial example of the wisdom of the Mosaic prohibition of yoking together two serviceable creatures of a different species. It was sure to come to a competition between horn and hoof. And the result was a very unstraight furrow, and the necessity of paring to the quick both hoof and horn.

Another lively Superintendent was brought up for having turned the Quarterly Love Feast into a Court of Appeal against the decision of the Circuit Quarterly Meeting, which had been adverse to his staying one more year. He was warned that a repetition of the offence would inflict upon his brethren the painful necessity of disciplinary action.

In the midst of these investigations some distinguished foreign laymen were admitted to a privilege not often shared by British Methodists. These, although "the servile progeny of Ham," were of royal blood. They had come from a far-off land, and were the conquests of the Gospel. They were introduced as the "Ashantee Princes," and were "appropriately addressed by the President."

The ex-President being disabled from attending Conference, Mr. Dixon was appointed to preach the sermon to the Conference. Mr. Fowler pronounces it to have been "appropriate and admirable."

Mr. Beaumont expressed his satisfaction that it was "*preached*, not *read*."

Dr. Bunting: "I am of a different opinion. Mr. Wesley did so (in preaching before the University), and an apostolical epistle was *read* to all the holy brethren."

Dr. Bunting alluded to the "Wesleyan Centenary Takings," and said: "No Wesleyan Preacher should give any countenance to such a book." He admitted that condemning a book might give it publicity and promote its sale; nevertheless, ultimately it would do good. Those who purchased the book would be less likely to be injured. This was prefatory to the reading of a letter condemnatory of the book, but he did not give the name of the writer. He added: "I think we should discountenance this book." A popular brother said: "I have some knowledge of the author of the book, but am under obligation not to disclose his name." Dr. Beaumont: "I think we should not condemn the work until we know what it is we are called upon to condemn." Mr. Naylor: "I wish to know, from the brother who says he knows, if the writer is a brother." Brother —: "I cannot do so directly and individually; none could do so." Mr. Reece: "I would not have any brother pressed to betray confidence. Let the writer himself confess to his brethren." Mr. S. D. Waddy: "I hope that brother will

not yield to any pressure or thumbscrewing to disclose what was told to him in confidence."

Dr. Bunting: "I think that Brother — should go to the author and tell him that if he will not confess, he, Brother —, will be obliged to disclose his name."

A brother whom no one could ever suspect of having been able to write the *Takings*, entertained the Conference with an elaborate exculpation of himself, which drew forth from Dr. Bunting and the President a testimony to his character which his after conduct did not verify.

Although Mr. Everett had spent in Newcastle five of the six years which elapsed since his return to Circuit work, and was now stationed no farther off than York, he did not deem it worth his while to attend the first Conference ever held in his own native county. He, however, wrote a letter complaining that in the Magazine advertisement of his "Life of Daniel Isaac," a part of the title had been left out: "Polemic Divine." The defence was that the alternative had been the leaving out of those words or of the whole advertisement, since that title was itself polemic, and needlessly and unduly emphasised the point on which that worthy man had differed from his brethren.

Dr. Bunting again called attention to the ineffectiveness of the disciplinary deprivations of one or more years of ministerial standing, which were sure to be restored.

It fell to Mr. Fowler to present to Conference from certain Methodist laymen of Newcastle a request of quite another kind from that which the ladies had preferred—namely, to set aside the reading of the Liturgy in the Conference chapel on the morning of the Conference Sunday.

The President: "I should not have asked permission of the Superintendent or the trustees or anybody else to introduce the Liturgy." Complaints were made of laymen reading the prayers.

Dr. Beaumont took a different view.

Mr. William Bunting: "I think we are now a Christian Church, and should assume all its functions and discharge all its duties. I differ from Dr. Beaumont's view."

Dr. Bunting: "I feel it in my heart to propose that at each Conference the official sermons be preceded by the reading of the prayers. If necessary, I will give notice of motion." The motion was called for immediately, then many hands were held up; but several were neutral.

The increase during the year in Great Britain was 16,158, with 19,603 on trial. Such, and so blessed, had been the result of



the recurrences to old principles, and the reviving of the old spirit by the Centenary celebration. The increase in Ireland was 661, and throughout the Connexion 22,557.

The most exciting and prolonged discussion was that on the dispute between the Canadian Conference and the Mission House in London. The original subject of dispute is all the more interesting and important as forming part of the ecclesiastical and Parliamentary history of both Canada and the Mother Country. The merits of the question can in no wise be made out except by going back to the origin of the question. It arose on this wise : On the division of Canada into Upper and Lower, in 1791, by the same Act of Parliament it was determined that one-seventh of the land allotted, either by grant or sale, should be reserved for the sustentation of ministers of religion, so that the settlers and their children might not become "Christian savages, wild as the untaught Indian brood." The result was that in less than half a century the Government had upon its hands a large number of separate blocks of land "reserves" for religious purposes. In 1791 there was no recognisable Church organisation connected with the Crown. When, therefore, it became necessary to apply these blocks of land to the purposes for which they were set apart, the question arose : To what body or bodies of Christian ministers should these allotments be assigned ? The clergy of the Anglican Church laid claim to every single block of land ; but the Government of Upper Canada, taking into account the fact that at the time of the appropriation there existed no organised body of Anglican clergy in the land, and that the settlers themselves belonged to various Christian denominations, saw that it would certainly be the most satisfactory and the most beneficial arrangement to distribute land proportionately among the principal denominations. In 1832 their offer to build "rectories" for Wesleyan Methodist ministers, on selected blocks of land, had been accepted as a "worthy deed, with all thankfulness," by Mr. Lord, the British representative ; and Dr. Alder had gratefully accepted £900 in hard cash on behalf of Canadian Missions.

But some leading ministers at home objected to the reception of any part of the reserved land.

Mr. President Jackson in 1839 had written to the Canadian Conference remonstrating against the receiving of what was claimed by the Episcopal clergy, the latter having adroitly begged the question by calling the allotments the "*clergy reserves*," confining to their own body the title *clergy*.

But the annual Government grant of £900 was a totally distinct subsidy in a different form—cash instead of land or houses, and for a different destination: "The Wesleyan Methodist Missionary Society," on behalf of, not the settlers, but the "aborigines." This sum Dr. Alder had regularly drawn from the Colonial Office in London.

But, on applying for the grant for 1840, he was informed that a previous application had been made on behalf of the Methodist Conference in Canada by an official signing himself the Rev. J. Ryerson. This was very awkward, disconcerting, and annoying, as it placed the Missionary Secretaries in a very questionable light. On the part of Mr. J. Ryerson it was as cool and keen as the Canadian climate. He had no business with the money whatsoever, being neither President nor Secretary but simply Book Steward. Lord John Russell, the Colonial Secretary, declined to pay the grant until the applicants could agree to whom it should be paid.

The two Ryersons appeared at the British Conference. Mr. E. Ryerson justified the acceptance of lands from the "clergy reserves" on the ground (1) that Methodism was the *oldest* ecclesiastical organisation in the province, and (2) that the representatives of the British Conference had approved, as had Dr. Alder, the only Missionary Secretary who had the slightest personal acquaintance with Canada. He was strongly in favour of the continued acceptance of the grant, especially as a check to the claims of the clergy, and as a practical protest against the assumptions in Canada of a dominant Church. During his speech Mr. E. Ryerson was repeatedly interrupted by Dr. Bunting, against which interference he and his brother besought the protection of the chair. Some irritating language had been used. Mr. Galland moved, and Mr. Fowler seconded, a string of resolutions on the subject, prefaced by an expression of respect for the Canadian brethren and a hope that in any further discussion all intemperance of language would be avoided.

Dr. Beaumont: "I think the censures on Mr. Ryerson should be qualified."

The President: "Have we not heard enough on this subject?"

Dr. Bunting: "The case has not been heard, and cannot be heard. Of all the Conferences I have attended, this has given me the most trouble. I will have nothing more to do with this case for ever. Nothing shall compel me to have anything more to do with it. I am sure it would be better to separate."

Mr. W. Bunting: "I am averse to this mode of determining a half-heard case."

Dr. Alder: "The union has been of great service to Canada, and if dissolved the blame must be imputed to the *Guardian newspaper*."

Mr. Taylor: "We want more light on the subject than we seem likely to get at present. It is admitted, however, that to dissolve the union would place things on a worse footing. But if we must dissolve, let it be done in the kindest and most affectionate spirit." This sentiment was warmly cheered.

Mr. W. Bunting: "I would have the whole case heard."

The President: "It is Friday, and the Conference cannot legally sit longer than next Tuesday."

Mr. Lord: "Politics have been the bane of Wesleyan Methodism in Canada. There can be no quiet in the land while the *Guardian* supplies the Sunday reading of our people in Canada. It is a most able and popular publication, with a large circulation amongst our ministers and people."

Dr. Bunting suggested the mode in which the matter should be settled. This was adopted. Various conversations succeeded. At last it was proposed, "That the allegations against Mr. Ryerson are proved."

Dr. Beaumont: "But there were extenuating circumstances."

Dr. Bunting drew up a resolution from which Dr. Beaumont disagreed.

Dr. Bunting: "I am for separation. If not, you must appoint a new Canadian Committee. But I will not be a member. I must be excused from spending any more energy on the union business."

Mr. Dixon: "We shall be better without the connection, and they will do better without us."

Mr. Lord: "I should deplore the separation. Evils would arise to the cause of Methodism. If it must be, let the onus of disunion be with them, and not with us."

Mr. Reece: "I have travelled in Canada, and have been on the committee up to the present time. I should regret the separation. Methodism is as uncompromising as the truth itself in regard to its doctrines and its original principles and aims; but when these are secured, it is the most accommodating system in the world."

Dr. Alder: "Unhappily, in this case it is our principles that are at stake. With the prevailing party in Upper Canada, whose organ is the *Guardian*, the mission of Methodism is not to cry, 'Ye must be born again'; but they think they are called to lay the foundations of political government."

Mr. Marsden (who had been our representative in Canada): "On this account, I had not much hope of the connection being maintained."

Mr. Haswell: "If only for the sake of future emigrants from this country to Canada, I would have the union maintained."

Mr. Galland read the principles on which he thought the union might be perpetuated: "That the *Guardian* be no longer a political paper, but, as at first announced, a purely religious and literary journal, and that this principle be maintained—the right of the State to secure religious instruction for the people."

Mr. McLean: "I think that, as Canada is becoming more unsettled, we had better not dissolve the union at present."

Mr. W. Bunting: "I cannot hold up my hand in support of a summary

dissolution, even if I stand alone. I would have a government body apart from the Mission House."

The next day, the last of the Conference, the resolutions on the Canada business were read in Conference, moved, and seconded. Mr. E. Ryerson complained of the lateness of the stage of Conference proceedings at which the decision was to be arrived at, and the consequent thinness of the Conference, this being the very last day, and a very large proportion having left already. "I will keep my feelings within my own bosom; but I do entirely dissent from the resolutions. I have not been permitted to look at them, but have subjected myself to a mortifying refusal by asking to do so. I think there is ambiguity or indistinctness in them, and that there is no probability that the Canadian Conference will alter their judgment on the points at issue."

Dr. Bunting: "I move that Brother Joseph Fowler be the President of the next Canadian Conference."

This most ridiculous proposition was carried.

Mr. Ryerson: "The Canadian Conference will claim the privilege to exercise their judgment on all and every point not included in the doctrinal standards or the constitutional regulations of Wesleyan Methodism. You require that the Conferences in Canada shall receive through you the Government grant, even if paid from Canadian property. This seems to us unjust, and even inconsistent. You have no business with the clergy reserves. Mr. Stinson himself stated that he would defend everywhere our right to deal with Canadian money voted for Canadian purposes."

Here Mr. Ryerson was interrupted by Dr. Bunting: "The money from the clergy reserves will be applied by the Mission House to missionary purposes, for the benefit of the aborigines."

Mr. Ryerson: "This is no answer at all. The Mission House in London can have no power to divert the land reserves from the purpose for which they were expressly reserved—namely, the religious instruction and oversight of the *settlers* themselves. This is beyond your power, as well as beyond your right. The yet unappropriated property is in the hands of the Governor-General; and the letters of the Missionary Secretaries have made on him a totally different impression from that which they now seem to have been intended to make. Lord John Russell acts as a politician. He will make use of the Methodists, as of other people, for political purposes."

Mr. Ryerson resumed: "We have no objection to your receiving the grant; but not in such a way as would imply that *you* are 'the Methodist Church in Canada.' The Conference in Canada will resist that. But the affair is at present in the Governor's hand."

Mr. E. Ryerson: "We think the resolutions of the committee very extraordinary—little less than cruel. You impute to me disingenuousness and want of integrity. You say of my esteemed brother that he has acted dishonestly. If you wish him to go back to his own country branded, let him go; but do not wish him to write to Lord J. Russell the opposite of what he has written. My brother will deem it his duty to refer to your decision in his communication to the Governor-General. I am sorry that you have passed the resolution condemnatory of my injured brother; it will not favour your views with the Governor, but may operate otherwise."

Dr. Bunting: "On great public matters we must merge our opinions

We cannot let the Connexion be committed to the violation of principles which the Conference has affirmed. Lord John will not do a dishonourable thing excepting under pressure."

Mr. Galland expressed "the feelings of respect entertained by the committee with regard to the brothers Ryerson."

Mr. E. Ryerson: "It is wrong for the Methodist Conference to try to get from one source what, if you get at all, you ought to get from another. If the committee here cannot get a grant from the territorial revenue, it has no right to *get it from* 'the clergy reserves,' and then apply it to a purpose for which those reserves were not intended. They were *expressly* 'reserved for settlers,' and never meant for missions."

Dr. Bunting: "If a man receives a promissory note from the Governor, and transfers it to another, is the original giver prejudiced? His claim now belongs to the man who holds the note, who must have his full claim."

Mr. E. Ryerson: "I will not advocate your claim against ours. You can have no right to apply money received expressly for one particular purpose to any other purpose. We regard these resolutions as a virtual dissolution of the union. This Conference is the parent of Canadian Methodism. But the preachers in Canada are not now in their minority. Your preparation of candidates for the ministry is much below ours. Ours are especially trained in Wesleyan polity."

Dr. Bunting: "I agree with very much that Mr. Ryerson has said; but I think the union is a perfect *ignis fatuus*. Will the Canadian Conference maintain the like relations to the English Church in Canada to those which are maintained by the British Conference to the Establishment in England?"

Mr. J. Ryerson: "In the Old Country an Established Church is good; it is not suitable to ours."

Mr. Naylor moved, and Mr. W. M. Bunting seconded: "That the separation do not take place." The latter said: "I am unwilling to throw them into the arms of what the Bishop of Exeter foresees with sagacity, and I fear with too much truth—*Puseyism*, or to buttress up American institutions in British dominions."

Mr. Galland, too, pleaded for the continuance of the union.

Dr. Alder: "I lament the haste manifested by the Conference. The decision will be most important."

The vote was: For immediate dissolution, 38; for postponement, 13.

This was indeed a thin house for the decision of a matter of such grave, far-reaching moment: not above one-seventh of the Conference, which closed after two hours' further session. Mr. Fowler adds: "I believe not more than thirty of the One Hundred were present when the Journal was signed."

It seems impossible to read this memorable debate without agreeing with the ministers who knew most about the case, that the union of the Methodists of Upper Canada with the British Conference was wrecked upon the treacherous, shifting, sucking sands of worldly politics. This was the deliberate and

firm conviction of Mr. Lord and Dr. Alder, who had lived and laboured in the country : Dr. Alder for a course of happy, fruitful years. He knew the heart of a Canadian, and had the key to it. He had threaded its wildernesses, and made himself at home within its shanties and its wigwams, and had charmed its towns and cities with his strong, commanding eloquence. He knew the genius of the people, and he loved it ; and was in quickest sympathy with their temperament and tone of mind. He knew that what the people wanted and, still better, what they wished for was the "glorious Gospel of the happy God." A keen-eyed Christian statesman, he saw that this alone could build them up into a Christian State, and make of them an integral and healthy portion of this mighty British empire.

This question I had the opportunity of thoroughly discussing with Dr. Ryerson himself, a generation later, at the Conference of 1876. As he then looked at it through the aerial perspective of six-and-thirty years, and the softening, mellowing haze of holy, tender memories, with the eyes of a chastened, long experience, he saw that he had been entangled in the errors of self-confident, impatient youth. He was but thirty years of age when sent over to this country as representative, to negotiate the union. This he accomplished with such ability and success that he was entrusted by both Conferences with special and yet undefined constituent powers. The gentlemanly brother who was sent from England as General Superintendent was scarcely older than the man he had to manage, who was constitutionally the stronger of the two, and he had to be posted up by his subordinate in all the details of administration. Dr. Ryerson was Canadian born, and had made his mark upon the Connexion and the country. The result was that the General Superintendent soon found himself to be generally superintended by the official brothers, who were more *au fait* than he. He soon found himself in danger of being transferred from the quarter-deck to the bowsprit, as not the captain but the figure-head. This did not suit the British constitution.

And this was not the worst. The two brothers were political leaders. They served two masters : the Governor-General first, the General Superintendent second. They took a decided party position with the Governor, Lord Durham, against the Colonial Secretary at home. They made their

paper a powerful party organ. The new wine of the kingdom began to contract a bitter taste and a heady, heating quality from the *coccus Indicus* of party strife. The condition of the country greatly aggravated the evils of the situation. It was fast becoming one great mashtub of fermenting faction. The British Conference could not compromise itself with home Administrations. When unity is at an end, union has become delusive and disturbing. It would, I think, have been better to give the Ryersons another year to think about it. This would, at least, have thrown on them the responsibility of the division.

Other utterances of Dr. Bunting during this Conference were very illustrative of his views and sentiments, and style of speaking in debate—*e.g.* "There was once a national fury against organs, as there was against robes the other day. The deputation which presented addresses to the Duke of Kent wore robes. Is there to be no censure for this departure from primitive simplicity?" Dr. Beaumont: "That was a harmless concession to an ancient custom of the Court; the robing of the President of the Methodist Conference would be an idle pageantry."

The decisive "Gedney case" came up before the Conference: a Lincolnshire parson had persisted in refusing to inter anyone baptised by a Methodist, though most courteously warned of the illegality of his conduct by the Superintendent of the Circuit and the Bishop of the diocese. Mr. S. D. Waddy blamed the Committee of Privileges for having in any measure compromised the matter.

Dr. Bunting advised the Conference to be silent on the subject till the law courts had pronounced.

It was reported by the Education Committee that there were ascertained to be 101 Wesleyan Methodist Day Schools in Great Britain, and the list was not yet complete. It was recommended that three selected young men should be sent to Glasgow to be trained as day-school masters.

Mr. Taylor referred to conversations in the Manchester District relative to the mode of administering baptism. Some wished to do without a form rather than use the Prayer Book form.

Dr. Bunting: "Who is it that wishes to do without a form?"

Mr. Atherton: "I ask permission to report myself. The Prayer Book form is full of heresy."

Dr. Bunting complimented Mr. Atherton on his attachment to order.

But as a Connexion we must have some rule. "I would propose some instructions in the *Minutes*. There are two objections to private baptisms: (1) It is contrary to Scripture; (2) to our express *Minutes*."

On two important practical matters Dr. Bunting modified his own strongly expressed views, and changed the policy of Conference. The first had reference to "Sheffield School." The Sheffield District Meeting sent up a "suggestion" that the word "supernumerary" should no longer be attached to the name of Mr. McLean.

Mr. S. D. Waddy: "The principle is adopted in Canada, why not at home? I wish the governor to consider himself responsible to Conference." Mr. Atherton: "If we appoint to this, we must appoint to other schools." Mr. Lomas: "I think there is no comparison between this and other schools. It has been reared at an immense cost and not for private gain. All our ministers on the Sheffield Circuit are *ex-officio* directors."

Dr. Beaumont: "I think it has as much connection with the Conference as it ought to have." Mr. McBrair thought so too, as we had no control over the appointment of masters or the character of the instruction. Mr. Galland: "I should have liked the proposal better if some things were not connected with it which tend to make the youth dissatisfied with the simplicity of worship in their own chapels at home. Our object should be to keep them to Methodism. I begin to feel uneasy about my own children." It was answered: "There is no law against the gown. It is worn in mission stations."

Dr. Bunting: "I have seen the school, and am, on the whole, pleased with it. There are the children of the *élite* of our Connexion. We had better take some notice of it by appointing a chaplain and governor. With respect to the gown, you have a university gownsman as head master, and others wear their robes as scholars. It is very proper that the governor should wear his Presbyterian gown. It would give him a visible standing. I did not wear the gown at the chapel opening. Not that I had any objection to it or no right to it. I have worn a gown in Surrey Chapel, and as a supply in a Methodist chapel in London have worn one, and have seen Mr. Benson and Mr. Rodda wearing one. I think we should send a man to secure the good and prevent the evil, and he should have as much authority as we can give him."

Mr. Rogers: "I have some doubt whether we can appoint a governor whom we have no power to control. It is childish to suppose that we can exert much influence over the school without this authority. I doubt whether we can settle the chapel on the Conference plan." The motion was carried by a large majority.

Of course, the question of marriages in Methodist chapels was still a vexed and vexing question, which was bound to rebound upon the Conference year after year, with gathering force, until it was determined.



Dr. Bunting : " In the licensing of chapels for marriages I would have the word 'preachers' substituted by ministers ; and in the heading of the stations, etc. Time is a great repealer. I think our danger is not from Churchmen but from Dissent. I would have no mention of our present position with regard to marriages, but leave it as it is. Marriages may be quietly introduced. But I must maintain that the Conference has expressed its judgment that marriages in our chapels should not be encouraged."

Dr. Beaumont : " I want to know why they should be discouraged. If we are admittedly in danger from both Churchmen and Dissent why send away our people to be married by Churchmen or Dissenters ! Let them have the ceremony in our own chapels. Why should we talk up the Church in its high notions. So long as we refuse to marry our own people we shall be said to admit that we are not full ministers. If we call ourselves such in the Minutes of Conference, let us be such before our people and the public."

Mr. W. M. Bunting : " I would have the distinction introduced on the plan : *Pastors and Preachers*." This was cheered by some and objected to by others. Many said that the matter of marriage should rest, and others that the Conference had discouraged it. J. Fowler : " No opinion has been given by the Conference, on one side or the other." The President confirmed this : " No opinion or advice has been given. The matter is to take its own course." Mr. Stanley : " The time will come when it will be as common to solemnise matrimony as to administer baptism."

J. Fowler complained of " many highly objectionable sentences in the *answers to the Irish Address* containing political allusions quite out of place in such a document, and with nothing to call for them in the Address to which it professed to be a reply."

Mr. Waugh : " The least said about politics the best. You had better leave such matters to our own prudence and Protestantism. We Wesleyan ministers are objects of jealousy to all parties." Dr. Beaumont spoke on the same side. Mr. Burdsall also. Mr. Dixon : " I hate neutrality. We are bound by past professions." Mr. Waugh defended his anti-political position triumphantly. " Let us devote ourselves wholly to the work of God. Why should we turn aside to keep up an establishment which does not require its members or its ministers to be converted ? The judgment of the Irish representatives as to our meddling with Irish politics should surely have great weight." Mr. Scott : " We should not with so much frequency allude to our support of the Church. I would avoid it now."

Dr. Beaumont moved : " That if reference be made to the Church it should be coupled with condemnation of the cruelty, bigotry, etc., of clergymen who refuse to bury children not baptised by themselves." Mr. W. M. Bunting seconded. J. Fowler moved that no allusion to Irish politics should be made in the Address. This was carried unanimously, with the exception of Dr. Beaumont and Mr. W. Bunting, the latter protesting that he would not second such a rascally resolution. This word was loudly condemned, and Mr. W. Bunting withdrew it.

This was first-rate fun between two men so closely related, and such mutually attached and admiring friends, as Mr. Fowler and Mr. W. M. Bunting. The Address was sent back to be " amended." When it came home from hospital Dr. Bunting, who had been

singularly silent through the first discussion, spoke most wisely in approval of the toning down of the terms of the Address.

Dr. Bunting : " I have lived long enough to know that large, sweeping censures against Christian bodies are generally unjust. I think we are in danger in these Centenary times of going to extremes. Mr. Wesley was asked by Mr. Moore if Mr. Fletcher had escaped this precipice. Mr. Wesley kept on writing ; the question was reiterated. At length Mr. Wesley threw down his pen and said : ' Yes, Harry, I think he has ; but if any man attempt to follow him, he will be sure to tumble over it. ' "

On the reading of the Address to the Queen, Prince Albert, and the Duchess of Kent, Dr. Beaumont objected to the phrase : " Protectress of the Church. " " It will be taken to mean the Established Church. If that phrase be retained, it is incumbent on us to state the true meaning of the word ' Church. ' " The objectionable phrase was crossed out.

The Pastoral address was of unusual length.

Dr. Bunting : " I admit the talent of the writer ; but there are some sentiments which I think should not now be put before our people. I would have no reference to the Church or Dissent. All the authorities are in favour of ecclesiastical Establishment. I would have a committee to make some alterations. " Mr. P. McOwan : " I know myself to be totally incompetent to write the Address. I never expected it to be accepted without revision. " The Editor and another were directed to make the required changes.

*The American Address* was accompanied by the President's account of his visit to the last General Conference as representative.

Dr. Bunting : " It is a monstrous thing that in a Methodist court a brother's evidence is not to be received because he is black. "

Mr. Ryerson : " In this country the law governs the people ; in America, the people govern the law. If all the slaves were emancipated to-morrow, what could they do in the present state of public opinion, which, in America, is above all law and Gospel too ? You had better bring them to the block at once. "

Dr. Hannah : " I think we had better not print the Address this year. If printed, copious notes may be added. "

Dr. Bunting noticed " the difference between West Indian and American slavery. I disapprove of great agitation ; but wherever there is a slave there is a sin. Christian people should appeal to God. We should have an annual day of fasting and prayer. We do not groan under this evil as we ought. Let the Address lie on the table. I am of opinion that silence is the best. "

Mr. Lord : " The Americans will have no cause of complaint. The Address from England four years ago was not printed. "

Dr. Dixon : " The Americans have stated their case, and we should answer in fraternal terms. "

Dr. Bunting : " Our communication called this forth. We cannot print our answer till they have received it. We should not be in a dignified position in fighting the American Methodists. It is not courteous to address them through the English Press. " It was determined that the Address do lie upon the table.

The President started a very significant conversation with regard to " some

chairmen of Districts who had returned no answer to a circular addressed to them by the authorities in London."

Dr. Bunting: "I think it uncourteous in these chairmen."

Such loyal, law-abiding men as ex-President Taylor, chairman at Manchester, and R. Waddy, chairman at Birmingham, defended their own reticence and that of their brethren. The point was: That the communication had not come to them as a matter of courtesy, but as from authorities. They wished to know whether the authority of a secretary of a London committee empowered him to impose any duty on the chairman of a District which was not laid upon him by the Conference.

Dr. Bunting moved and carried a resolution "authorising the committee appointed by the Conference to manage the several departments of the business of the Connexion in the intervals of its session, in order to be furnished with statistical information on the matters of business severally confided to their care through their appointed officers, to send—when they deem it expedient—to the Superintendents or Chairmen of Districts suitable circulars and schedules, and direct the preachers duly to return such schedules properly filled up."

It is to be noted (1) that the defaulters in this case were not prickly and impracticable brethren, but steady-going and Methodistical fathers in the Connexion, devoutly and good-temperedly intent upon their duty. The very smallness of the thing required of them only emphasised their neglect of it. (2) All that the Conference entitled a Connexional committee to require from Superintendents or a Chairman was to schedule "statistical information on the matters of business severally confided" to the schedule-sending committees. Does not this go to show that the claim set up at the foregoing Conference, that "the London committees" were "authorities," whom to disobey would bring the delinquent, of whatsoever age or standing, into Connexional discredit, was beginning to cause a sensitive uneasiness even among the most solid, trusty brethren?

Another very noticeable thing was the formal and uninterested way in which the reports of Departmental committees were received in silence, and the votes of thanks proposed and passed without remark. The officers had, this time, no "complaining" to complain of, and no badgering to groan at. The brethren might seem to have been immersed in conjugal correspondence, or in studying the stations. Yet some interesting particulars came out. "The Sheffield boys" had raised £300 for the Ashantee Mission.

Dr. Bunting proposed: "That there should never be more than three Welsh ministers in the Hundred, a larger number being out of all proportion."

## MANCHESTER CONFERENCE OF 1841.

The Conference of 1841 was held in Manchester, Dr. Dixon being elected to the chair by a very large majority. Joseph Fowler and Isaac Keeling were elected into the Legal Hundred.

A somewhat stormy conversation took place as to the young men recommended to be received on trial. There were seventy-seven candidates. Mr. Fowler called attention to the new and startling position in which we found ourselves. We were building enormous chapels with enormous debts, around which the population was growing fast; the Lord of the harvest was answering our prayers by sending forth labourers. Better have more moderately sized chapels, and more pastors to look up and look after the hungry multiplying sheep.

Dr. Bunting argued that in commerce it was thought good to keep the supply in advance of the demand.

J. F. thought this an inaccurate analogy. Even in commerce a large excess of supply over demand must inevitably produce a glut, which would be followed by revulsion; and in the labour market the consequences are very serious. Increase the number of moderately sized and debtless chapels and of ministers to shepherd those who came to hear them.

The brightest name upon the death-roll was Theophilus Lessey. High testimonies, fully merited, were paid to him as a preacher of the foremost rank. But the point most dwelt upon was the untiring freshness with which he had dwelt exclusively—in the most glowing and persuasive manner—on the vital truths of the Gospel, such as the priesthood of Christ, the power of the Atonement, and the paternal providence of God in Christ. Dr. Bunting and Dr. Beaumont were equally strong on this point.

The President remarked that Lessey was all the more popular because so evangelical and earnest. To aim at popularity was very paltry in a minister of Christ.

Dr. Bunting recommended the book on "Preaching" by the Bishop of Ohio. Mr. Scott also insisted on the evangelic element in Lessey's preaching. Mr. S. Jackson described the holy indignation which Lessey had expressed on listening to a non-Methodist sermon from a Methodist pulpit. Lessey said: "I could have collared the man."

Mr. W. M. Bunting said: "I can't imagine how any Methodist preacher can have any pleasurable feeling in preaching anything else than the vital doctrines of the Gospel."

The most touching record was that of S. L., admittedly the ablest young man in our ranks, who had died in the sixth year of his itinerancy. It was said that he had impaired his constitution by smoking.

Dr. Beaumont said that he remonstrated with him on the subject, and warned him of the effects of this overpowering habit. It unfitted him for the strain of a Methodist preacher's duties. "I would not say anything about it now if I had not said the same to him. I hope I may be excused for these advices. As I am now getting among the seniors, whether I will or not, I may give this admonition as a service to young men."

Mr. Reece: "I concur with Dr. Beaumont."

The President: "I hope that the medical speech of Dr. Beaumont and the paternal speech of Mr. Reece will convince us all of the evil habit of smoking. There is to be no more smoking" (cheers and clapping) "and no more *clapping*."

Dr. Bunting paid a warm testimony to old John Barrett, who had finished a ministerial course of fifty-five years. "His ministry was energetic, simple, pointed, and he could not rest until it was saving souls."

A very sad case, which touched me rather closely, was that of a devoted and laborious minister who was struck down, at the age of forty-three, by a fever caught in the discharge of his pastoral duties.

Mr. Duncan asked whether there was any truth in the current report that he had sent successively to each of his three colleagues, requesting them to come and pray with him, but they all refused to visit him. The chairman of the District said that it was too true.

Dr. Bunting: "There is not a Catholic priest in the kingdom who would not have visited him." Mr. Reece: "This is a fearful novelty among us. I would have a suitable letter sent to them." Dr. Beaumont: "The man who deserts a dying brother through fear is more likely to catch the disease than the man who obeys the call of humanity, religion, and duty." An extenuation was pleaded on behalf of the youngest colleague on the ground "that, though nervous, he was kind-hearted." Dr. Bunting: "He is wrong-hearted. There can be no doubt what sort of a letter the Conference should send. It should begin by stating our incredulity that a Methodist preacher could be guilty of such neglect."

By the blessing of God upon his strong constitution and his abstemious habits, he survived the fever, but sank under the consequent exhaustion. I dined and took tea with him a little while before his fatal illness, and was greatly charmed by his

simplicity, humility, and devotion to the work. He seemed built for a long, effective ministry.

Under the question "Any objections," etc., the first name paused at was that of Henry Moore.

Dr. Bunting: "I always feel it my duty to object to Mr. Moore's neither printing nor destroying Mr. Wesley's papers, as directed." Mr. Reece: "I have done all that could be done with him."

Dr. Bunting: "There is one practical use. We shall not canonise him."

The next case of interest was that of a probationer, who had been emboldened by the denunciation at the last Conference of the objection to a Presidential robe as "irrational fury," and by the repeated declarations that there was no law against a Wesleyan Methodist minister appearing in the pulpit in "clerical costume," to astonish the Methodists of his circuit by "*trying it on*" his own person. For this the District Meeting had reproved him, and also his Superintendent for not having expressed his disapprobation so strongly as he ought to have done.

Dr. Bunting moved for a committee. Dr. Beaumont contended that, as this was not the only offender, the whole case should come before the whole Conference.

Dr. Bunting: "Whatever be the judgment of the Conference on the general question, there can be no doubt that it is improper for a man to assume the ministerial costume who is not in the full ministry." The next case was that of W. M. Bunting. On the reading of his name Mr. Powell and Dr. Beaumont rose together. J. Fowler rose to order. Mr. Taylor stated "the facts of the case," that Mr. W. M. Bunting had worn a gown in the pulpit of a chapel in Manchester, which Mr. Taylor thought to be a literary distinction; but, as Mr. Taylor thought, "contrary to the rule and injurious to the peace of the society."

Dr. Bunting: "I protest against the inaccuracy of Mr. Taylor's sentiments. I would take up the case of the individuals, and, if necessary, have a general discussion at a proper time." Mr. Entwisle: "I would have us to be calm, as worthy of a deliberative assembly. I think our societies are perilled."

Dr. Bunting: "I rise to order. If we are to be calm, we must not talk of the peril of our people."

The President: "There was nothing against Mr. William Bunting in the District Meeting."

Dr. Bunting: "I rise to order. It is for the Court to determine when the case shall be heard; if Dr. Beaumont choose to be accuser, he must not be judge also. He must retire till the others judge." Dr. Beaumont: "No party has ever been so interrupted."

Dr. Bunting: "I deny that the case has been opened."

Mr. Beecham: "Dr. Beaumont has no right to force the time of discussion. He is all right in pressing the charge, but the time must be settled by the Conference." The President: "The consideration of the general question

should be deferred till character is gone through." Mr. W. M. Bunting: "I do not see why I should be dealt with differently from the probationer. I scorn to avail myself of a refusal to answer the questions of my brethren. I will not allow it to be said that I was treated at the District Meeting with 'tenderness.' I was treated with justice and dignity, but not with a particle of tenderness. I have a strong feeling, but not a childish fondness, for gowns and bands. I hope when the subject comes in for discussion that I shall not be made to appear ridiculous. I would let Dr. Beaumont know that satire is a game at which I am not afraid to enter the lists with Dr. Beaumont, but I do not approve of it on such subjects. I think there is not that strict regard to equity and consistency which is a branch of eternal justice. I am afraid of myself, but I hope I shall have courteousness."

Dr. Beaumont: "I approach this question with all seriousness. I think it most important to the body. I hold that Mr. William Bunting, by assuming the gown without the leave of Conference and without, if not against, the advice of the father and brethren so accessible to him, has broken a brotherly contract and committed an unconnexional and dangerous act."

The subject came up again on the mention of the name of S. D. Waddy, who was charged with intruding gown and bands into the pulpit of Waltham Street Chapel, Hull, in opposition to the authority of his Superintendent. The District Meeting had spent two days upon the case, and acquitted Mr. Waddy of blame, with but one dissident. His Superintendent appealed against this decision. With this appeal was connected a charge against the Chairman of the District for having counselled Mr. Waddy against the counsel of this Superintendent on the matter of the gown.

Dr. Bunting: "I think the matter might have been easily settled if there had not been so much personal feeling in it. I fear some brethren wish for debate. I feel tempted to give them my opinion. No one has the liberty to introduce the gown into a Methodist pulpit without the authority of Conference. After what was said at the last Conference, no one should have done it, especially against the judgment of his Superintendent and his express disapproval. That was still worse. I do not think any man is personally implicated. We are not in a state of unity on the subject. Some of us cannot go to the other side. It would be a condemnation of Wesley and Coke, and of other Churches. Why go out of our way to condemn them? I should object to any assuming of the gown as matters stand at present. Leave it till there is harmony of opinion. For the Lord's sake, let us talk about other matters."

Mr. Marsden: "Dr. Bunting has spoken under a gracious influence. I hope all may be amicably settled now."

Mr. S. D. Waddy: "If any man think I would contend for a gown he is utterly mistaken. There are principles involved in this affair."

Mr. W. M. Bunting: "I say it in calmness, that if the party is to triumph of which the Superintendent of Hull West is the type, I must resign my office among you. I am sorry to see so bitter a party spirit."

Mr. Scott: "I would recommend to Mr. William Bunting and Mr. Waddy the spirit which Dr. Bunting has exemplified in his excellent speech. I think the opposition to the gown has been very unfairly met, and that the objection to Mr. Powell and Dr. Beaumont was unjust. I regret these attacks of one member of the body upon another. Let us cultivate the spirit of brotherly kindness. We shall work the best together as we approach the nearest to one another."

Mr. S. D. Waddy: "I do not intend to give any threat; I only wish to be relieved of the degradation of my present association as to my Circuit."

Mr. Newton: "I cling to the hope that the Conference may be able to settle this" (after whispering to some around him). "Perhaps in the present aspect of the affair a committee is inevitable."

Dr. Bunting: "I must not be misunderstood; there is no declaration for the gown and no declaration against it. No one should take upon himself to wear the gown without the consent of Conference."

After an uproarious talk, it was decided that there should be a committee.

Four days later the committee brought in its report, which was: "That all the brethren should desist from wearing the gown without the express sanction of the Conference, and that it was expedient that all the brethren now stationed in Hull West should be removed."

Mr. W. M. Bunting: "I propose that the word 'abstain' be substituted for the word 'desist.' With all respectful and deferential regard to the judgment of the Conference, I cannot consent to be deprived of the right to make a statement in which my honour and my personal connection with this body are involved."

The President: "Mr. Bunting shall have full opportunity at a convenient time."

Mr. S. D. Waddy: "I wish to express my approval of the kind and courteous manner in which the investigation has been conducted. I should like to know whether the vote includes the removal of the present ministers from the Hull West Circuit."

It was answered that it did.

The Superintendent said: "I heartily concur in that decision."

Mr. W. M. Bunting: "I concur in what Mr. Waddy says as to the courteous manner in which the business has been conducted. I entirely submit to the decision, and shall not assume the gown (whilst retaining my opinion), notwithstanding any authorisation to the contrary."

Dr. Bunting: "I am of opinion that the two brethren should remove from Hull. They should relieve us magnanimously from the difficulty of discussing the grounds on which it is recommended by the committee. The tattle about organic changes originates with the devil. This talk about 'a ministerial party' in the Conference originated with the Radicals. I know it. It did appear to me that the rule about the gown might be rescinded, and it was rescinded on a motion in full Conference. The question is now



closed as effectually as if there were an enactment on the case. We have something better to do than dispute on such points."

Mr. Atherton: "I do not recollect the enactment against the gown being rescinded."

Neither Dr. Bunting nor any other member of the Conference was able to supply the required date, and no record of any such rescinding was produced. Thus this crumpled, rumpled, sorely-pulled-at gown question was at last neatly, softly smoothed and folded, and sprinkled with the fragrant and protective "holy water" of fraternal kindliness, and deposited serenely in the wardrobe of Church History. It has only been disturbed a time or two, and aired respectfully, and then put back again. This was the jubilee of its origination. In 1792, the year after Wesley had been laid to rest, the whole Connexion was disturbed, as a placid pool might be by some hissing aerolite, by the appearance in canonicals, in gown and bands, of two of Wesley's preachers, Bradburn and Roberts, at the opening of Portland Chapel, Bristol.

The next Conference, however, threw a thick wet blanket on the business by enacting curtly, "No gowns, cassocks, bands, or surplices shall be worn by any." Next year the rule was re-enacted, with the penalty attached of self-expulsion by the very act; and this decision was embodied in that authoritative compendium "The Large Minutes." No less a man than President Pawson was obliged to doff his gown and wear instead the white sheet of a candle-bearing penitent. No wonder that the fear of being so ignominiously "unfrocked" had deterred for very nearly half a century all further introductions of the clerical costume into Wesleyan Methodist pulpits.

But the assertion by "the highest authority in Methodism" that there was no existing prohibition of the wearing of the gown in a Methodist pulpit, and the strong liking for it which he had manifested during the debate on the governor's gown at Sheffield and on the proffered Presidential robe at the Newcastle Conference, and especially his denunciation of the opposition to such vestment as an "irrational fury," had emboldened certain brethren with strong proclivities in that direction to assume the ministerial garments, which were as much disliked by many as they were desired by some. Not only had two of the very finest of the younger ministers

adopted these habiliments, and a pert probationer astonished the unambitious natives by appearing in this garb, but a literary brother in the ninth year of his ministry had surprised and astounded the soldiers and dockyard men and contractors of Portsmouth by an ecclesiastic escapade of the same kind. More than once the discussion in the Conference had assumed a rather serious aspect. Besides this uproarious talkation which preceded the appointment of a committee, Mr. Fowler notes at another point that the Conference was very clamorous and in great confusion, and again the President was called upon to interfere between the combatants. Again a long and noisy discussion wastes the time of Conference; this Mr. Fowler has not patience to record. Twice during the debate even William Bunting lost that classic, Christian calmness which gave an added charm to his deliverances. The two Doctor B.'s came into unusually sharp collision. Dr. Bunting said, with regard to his noble son: "He does, unfortunately, bear the name of Bunting, and that is the reason why he is treated so unfairly." To which Dr. Beaumont answered: "I regret the fact that one of the parties in this case bearing the name of Bunting should be mixed up with the matter in the least." Whereupon Dr. Alder said: "I protest against Dr. Beaumont occupying so much of the time of the Conference. I have been twenty-eight years in the Body, and have not occupied the time of the Conference thirty minutes."

Dr. Bunting did himself great honour and vastly added to his influence by the mediating posture and position he took up in this debate. He put his point admirably in these words: "I appeal to the good feeling of the Body. The law of 1793 was made to please the High Church Party, who denied that we are ministers. Are we now to enact any law which will establish this hypothesis? Would this be wise? Let us leave the matter as it is, and advise any brother not to adopt the gown."

This was the real point both of William Bunting and of Samuel Waddy, and of the best laity who thought with them. To the Hull ladies who were the prime movers in the movement it was a mere æsthetic preference. To Bradburn in 1792 it was both ecclesiastic and æsthetic. To an able man, so intent on his own way, and so accustomed to enjoy it as Dr. Bunting unquestionably was, the self-conquest which was involved in his giving up the gown was a notable achievement. If the like moderation and predominant regard for the peace and the

spiritual prosperity of Zion had prevailed in the Organ Case of 1827-28, hundreds of devoted members would have been saved to Methodism. The gown question in 1841 did too much mischief as it was, especially to the noble Methodism of the Hull West Circuit. It deprived the people of the ministrations of a preacher who had taken a strong grasp upon the population. His combined massiveness and gracefulness of style was specially adapted to the genius of the people. The town and gown disturbance delayed the first Hull Conference for six years. It had been determined to hold it there in 1842, but letters came to the Conference of 1841 from the stewards of both Circuits, complaining that "the feeling in favour of the Conference is not so strong as it was, and it will not be convenient to hold it there next year."

Another painful subject of discussion was the first volume of the *Wesleyan Takings*.

Dr. Bunting read a minute from the London District which referred to that book. This mentioned the names of several brethren said to be suspected of its authorship, at least in part. Amongst these suspects occurred the honoured name of the President himself, who justly claimed precedence at the bar. Being interrogated, he denied positively. Dr. Beaumont stepped next into the dock. He said: "I have never written a word to which I was ashamed to put my name. But I do not think it for the honour of the Body to prosecute this inquiry in this fashion; I object to it."

Dr. Bunting: "The book is a distinct attack upon the Conference. I have a contempt for the understanding of the writer. It is the most illogical production that I ever read. I will not defend my character; it is not worth defending. The book would not kill a flea." Mr. W. Bunting: "I think that no man should refuse to answer; that Mr. Everett be sent for and the question put to him. No man should do, as a Christian minister, that for which he would be horsewhipped if he were not a minister. I am sorry that I am not endowed with power to give utterance to my abomination of this low morality."

Dr. Beaumont: "If we press this question any further we shall invest an ephemeral matter with an enduring interest, and excite a ferment which it will be hard to settle or suppress."

Dr. Bunting: "I complain of the personality of Dr. Beaumont's speech."

Dr. Bunting read a letter which he had prepared to be sent to Mr. Everett, calling upon him to deny the imputation if he pleased; and saying that his ministerial character would be higher if he could with truth make this disclaimer.

To this letter Everett returned a very lengthy reply. As might have been foreseen, he seized immediate advantage of a mistake, amounting to a misfortune: the assumption of the London District Meeting to inquire into the characters of brethren belonging to five other District Meetings, which alone were

charged with the responsibility. He himself turned accuser, by charging the London District Meeting with "assuming the prerogatives of a Court of Inquiry over other districts. I resolved at once, and at all hazards, to resist the encroachment."

This was his only point. It formed a cutting counter-charge against the chairman of the London District—Dr. Bunting—and a rhetorical declaration that he would not plead in the case at all, either guilty or not guilty. It is just a contemptuous snapping of the fingers that held the pen that wrote the *Takings*, and then clenching them into the fist of defiant challenge. The position taken up by him is just the same as that in which he intrenched himself seven years later, in 1849—he demands a "regular trial, or to be let alone."

Mr. Cusworth inquired if any question had been put to Mr. Everett in his own District Meetings. Answer: "No." Mr. Rattenbury: "I introduced the subject at the 'preacher's meeting,' but it was difficult to be serious."

On the reading of Mr. Everett's reply, Dr. Bunting said: "I deny that there is an interrogative in the letter from the London District. We desired the Conference to do so. The man who is guilty of dishonourable concealment is not to be trusted. He is said to have made a brilliant atonement by taking a missionary deputation. He complains that he has not had the honours of the Body, has not been on committees. We put him on the Book Committee; he did not attend. He says: 'Twenty years ago he cut with me!' Why? Because he was not made a sub-editor. This was not my fault. He was rather unpleasantly obsequious. I have a poor opinion of a man who will not answer, unless he be '*sui generis*' like Dr. Beaumont, and I think *him* incapable of writing the *Takings*. I had nothing to do with the London District Meeting excepting being the chairman against my will."

Mr. Burdsall's letter was read. He refused "to meet" the mere assumption that he was guilty.

Mr. Reece: "I think the Editor should be protected; he brought the matter before the District Meeting." The senior Editor, Mr. T. Jackson: "I knew that some of the things said against me in the book were flagrantly untrue; and doubted whether some parts of it could be written by a Methodist preacher. But I wished for nothing personal; I thought something was due to the Conference. I am of opinion that the writers of those two letters have set the Conference at defiance."

Mr. Atherton: "If Mr. Everett were to swear in my presence that he is not James Everett, I should as soon believe him as if he were to say that he is not the author of that book. He says that he has three styles; he has four, one of which he cannot conceal. There should be some notice taken of this."

Mr. S. D. Waddy: "I protest against the mischievousness and the wickedness of the book. No principle on which it is written can be sustained. The book refers to personal defects in a most ungentlemanly manner. I will say, not in the spirit of contumacy, these questions are not to be answered. I will answer no questions."

Mr. Atherton: "I think the author's name would have subjected him to an action for damages. Men's characters and usefulness are injured by it." Mr. W. S. made some foolish, frivolous remarks.

Mr. Grindrod: "The book will send our young people to quiz the preachers."

Mr. Galland: "There is much to admire in the characterisation of the deceased preachers, but the book as a whole is to be condemned."

Mr. W. M. Bunting: "We shall do little good if we have not the courage to carry out our inquiry about the men who have not the simplicity and chivalrous impatience to answer it. The *Taking* of Mr. Bowers is shameful. I know but one man who holds such a ridiculously low opinion of himself as John Bowers, and that is Jabez Bunting."

Dr. Beaumont: "I complain of my name having been called in question in my absence, in a District which had no jurisdiction over me whatever, and on no evidence but that of a report contained in the very preface the truthfulness of which is at the same time denied. It is below the dignity of the Conference to notice such a book as the *Wesleyan Takings*. I move the order of the day."

Mr. S. Dunn seconded.

Dr. Bunting referred to the "Brotherhood of the body, so much closer than that of the Church of Scotland, which did not exchange livings every three years."

Mr. Bowers: "My feelings are painfully excited. I feel myself deeply injured: not so much from being described as cultivating an oratorical manner as from the imputation of motive. If I am a public actor, you should drive me from amongst you. I have many infirmities, but I claim to be an honest man. I am now afraid to go into the pulpit, fearing that the book may have been extensively read."

It was moved and carried: "That the Conference expresses its regret that this book has been published."

It was then moved: "That the letters of Mr. Everett and Mr. Burdsall are unsatisfactory, and unworthy of Wesleyan ministers."

J. Fowler objected to this resolution.

Mr. Stanley: "The review contained what I wish had not been there. I am in a difficulty about Mr. Burdsall. Some of the descriptions of the deceased are powerfully written."

Dr. Bunting: "If Mr. Everett and Mr. Burdsall are censured, so ought Dr. Beaumont to be."

Dr. Beaumont: "I complain that the Conference should return upon its track to brand a name which has been passed ten days ago."

Nevertheless this fresh brand was stamped on Joseph Beaumont's name.

On looking back on this unhappy and unseemly sequel to the Centenary celebrations with eyes which eagerly perused the *Centenary Takings* within a few weeks of its untimely publication, and which looked upon the stir it made with wonder what might come of it, one cannot but confess that there is little else but to turn to be gathered from the contemplation. As to the

book itself, it is universally admitted to be the work of a very cunning draughtsman ; but he was lamentably lacking in some essential elements of high-class literary portrait painting, especially in geniality and sympathy and a generous catholicity of appreciation. He held a hard and sharply pointed pencil, but he sadly wanted tenderness of touch and delicacy of handling, breadth of treatment and wholeness of impression. He could better draw an abnormally or imperfectly developed feature than he could present a contour or a full-length figure. A tendency to exaggeration was disagreeably apparent. Priding himself on not leaving out the wart upon a hero's front, he would magnify the wart into a wen, and, boasting that he would call a spade a spade, he scrupled not to call a spade a spear. Hence it has long since been confessed, even by the writer's warm admirers and adherents, that the condemned book was really reprehensible in several respects. There was a Carlylian cynicism about it which would be endlessly popping up like a Punch with his bâton and grimace. But its worst fault was its irreverent abuse of Scripture for the purposes of cheap and flippant punning. This most despicable form of profane buffoonery was stamped upon the very title-page in a shocking perversion of the blessed Master's saying, "Whose is this image and superscription?" It was, moreover, mischievous in tendency, prompting not only young people but readers of all ages to "quiz" their ministers. In most uncivil fashion it held up to public scorn the physical disadvantages of individual ministers, and with bad taste and feeling called the attention of hearers to the peculiarities of pronunciation, and constitutional defects, with all the carnality of Corinthian criticism. "His bodily presence is weak, and his speech contemptible." It made game of awkward mannerisms of which the minister was himself too discouragingly conscious, and the listener too apt to notice of his own accord. It was, above all, *unbrotherly* in a very high degree. The victim of such heartless vivisection for the entertainment of the public might most fittingly complain : "All my faults observed, set in a note-book, read, and conned by heart." The usefulness of a minister of Christ was thus lessened and imperilled, and it tended to reverse the couplet, "Those *remained to scoff* who went to pray." It was a sinful violation of the address of Wesley to the preachers : "*Let them beware how they despise each other's gifts.* Let them never speak slightly of each other in any kind." But the wisdom of the course adopted to unearth the midnight prowler

may be gravely questioned. It is only fair to notice that no action was attempted till the third edition of the book was published, with an acrid and aggressive preface. The faithful, honest strictures of the Magazine upon the objectionable aspects of the *Takings* had aroused the anger of the *Taker* against the officials of the Book Room and the other departmental men in London, and he was resolved to "feed fat the ancient grudge he bore them." So he waylaid the *posse comitatus*, sprang out upon them from his thicket, and belaboured them with all the force and fury of John Bunyan's Giant Maul. The sensitive senior Editor, on the calling over of his name at the London District Meeting, stood on his defence against his nameless and masked assailant.

The position was forthwith taken up which had been silently conceded by the Conference of the Centenary, "That any reflection on the acts of any London official is a reflection on the Conference itself, whose appointee and agent the official is." The principle was precisely that laid down by Governor Morley at the Grove: "He that insults a monitor insults the master, and he that insults the master insults the governor and insults the committee, and he that insults the committee insults the Conference!" which Benjamin Brown carried to the *ultima ratio* by exclaiming, "And he that insults the Conference insults the Connexion at large!"

Thus the names of seven several ministers, at that time assembled in five different Districts, were brought beneath the cognisance of a District under the single question, "Any objection against Thomas Jackson?" with immediate action thereupon. Resolutions recommending that the Conference should institute close inquiries on the subject were proposed and sent up to that body. Written notice of these resolutions was officially communicated to each one of the seven suspected brethren, and on the strength of these resolutions each one of the suspected members was called in question by the Conference. This was, to say the least, a novel and questionable method of procedure, which required an after resolution of the Conference to invest it with legality.

This unique irregularity was all the more unfortunate from the fact that the innovating District Meeting was no other than the *London* District Meeting, and the chairman was no other than Dr. Bunting himself. This gave Mr. Everett a chance of which he was sure to take advantage. Mr. Everett's

counter-question was in one sense very easy, in another very hard, to answer. How would Dr. Bunting, and how would some others have felt if the brethren of the York District had taken hold of reports concerning London brethren, and given them an opportunity of this sort of clearing themselves. Would they have concluded it right and kind? York has just as much right to take cognisance of reports concerning London brethren as London has of York—unless, indeed, London were at liberty to constitute itself a sort of Scotland Yard for the whole Connexion. Dr. Bunting seems to have seen this when he strove to divest himself of all personal responsibility in the affair. "I had nothing to do with the District Meeting, except being chairman against my will."

One cannot but feel wonder that the conscript fathers of the London District should commit themselves to such a course without first asking what might readily result from it, and determining what counsel they should give if the worst should come to the worst. That one District Synod comprised full fifteen presidential men, besides a plethora of other sages; "men of understanding to discern the times, to know what Israel ought to do." At their head sat the very chiefest of Church statesmen that Methodism has ever yet produced or seems likely to produce as yet. One might blamelessly have thought that in taking such a step they would have looked where they were going, and made their ground fairly sure before they trusted to it such a battery. The brethren to be questioned were, to a man, somewhat strong-willed personalities. If a trio or a brace of them should elect to throw the *onus probandi* on the propounders of the theorem, what then? Were they prepared to push and press the matter to the bitter end?

One member of the London District Meeting was prepared for this, and proposed to the Conference to disown the brethren who refused to answer, to leave them stationless, and without name or place in the *Minutes* of the Conference. Two of the very young men in Methodism strongly advocated that conclusion. But this was not generally entertained. The result was that the Conference found itself in a most humiliating and perplexing plight—the condition of an assaulting host which has plenty of powder but no shot to spare. Whoever claimed the victory, James Everett was left in full possession of the field.



But surely a brother so unbrotherly must have found himself in unendurable restraint and isolation! But he had read the situation more correctly. He had gained in notoriety far more than he had lost in the respect of the fraternity. His congregation-drawing and money-raising power was much enhanced. But what Superintendent would invite into his Circuit a brother under ban? A greater number than had ever done so yet. He had more invitations than ever. He was more delighted than distressed or disturbed by the, to him, innocuous ado which he had succeeded in creating.

And what had been gained by the action instituted by the London District Meeting, which had to be legalised after the fact? A profitless commotion, an insolent, aggressive answer from the only minister whom there was any solid reason to suspect, and what might just as well have been done without all this intervening trouble—an impotent expression of regret that the book had been published.

And was it wise to handcuff Dr. Beaumont with James Everett in the same condemnation? I do not plead for his refusal to reply in express and formal terms. But had he not implicitly replied in the indignant disavowal of ever having published an anonymous attack on anyone? That sort of thing was not in Beaumont's line. He had for it as little liking as he had leisure. Dr. Bunting, who proposed the degradation, had a little while before avowed his conviction that Dr. Beaumont was incapable of such an act. Of course, the object was to let down Beaumont to the level of James Everett. The effect was rather to haul up Everett to the place of Dr. Beaumont. Besides this, it stung an able and admirable preacher with a bitter feeling of unfairness and injustice. He said, "I leave the Conference with a new brand upon my brow, which fools may mistake for a laurel."

The general question of the *brotherly question* must be deferred till we come to the expulsions which resulted from its ultimate enforcement. I will only say that Mr. William Bunting, with his usual felicity and force of phrase, expressed the true sentiment and feeling when he said that a frank answer was required by the "simplicity of a true Methodist preacher, and a chivalrous impatience of everything like unbrotherliness, or meanness, or duplicity."

Dr. Bunting, when the case was closed, said: "I should like to give Mr. West an opportunity of denying any

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knowledge of the authorship." But Mr. West let slip the opportunity.

A very painful case brought out the gentle side of Dr. Bunting's nature. A well-connected brother, accustomed to the higher range of Circuit, was charged by the son of a peer with attempting to obtain land for a Connexional purpose by promising Methodist votes at an election. This had become matter of public animadversion by the publishing in the newspapers of the Methodist minister's application and the candidate's reply. Lord B. had called the attention of the Conference to this attempt of a Methodist minister to 'corrupt the morals of his son.' It was determined that a letter should be written to his lordship, accompanied by a resolution strongly condemnatory of the minister's act, and that the delinquent should be deposed from the Superintendency and removed from the Circuit, and that he should be rebuked from the chair. The President informed him that "his conduct was unworthy of a Methodist preacher, and compromised his Church; that a Methodist preacher should keep away from political struggles and political trickery."

The theological examination of the candidates was got through more quickly but with less interest. I think a great improvement might be made.

Dr. Bunting: "Pardon is a remission of the penalty, but involves also restoration to right and privilege." Mr. W. Bunting: "God will by no means clear the guilty, but He accepts the Divine substitute." The President recommended to the young men submission to the Conference and respectful obedience to their Superintendents. "I am quite sure that the Wesleyan Methodist system is more Scriptural than that of any other body." Dr. Bunting took occasion to remark: "Fewer chapels and more horses would save more souls." (Eight hundred chapels had been built in five years.) "I think we are forsaking our calling. We should preach in barns, the cottages of the poor, and out of doors."

Dr. Bunting: "I oppose the division of Districts. I think it well to have many preachers together once a year, and if a spirit of disaffection prevails we may need large Districts."

In any case it would have been a blunder to divide the Bedford District.

Leave was asked by letter that Brother Caughey might be present at the Conference.

Dr. Bunting: "I think he should be told that he should not write letters to be published in American papers, etc." Application was made for a brother to come into Conference who had refused permission from the District Meeting to attend, but, being dissatisfied with his appointment, had thought

it worth his while to come. It was at length decided that he should come in "but it is not to form a precedent."

Mr. Parry having been ordained as an Independent minister, "had a scruple against re-ordination." Agreed that he be simply *recognised*.

A letter was received from the venerable ex-President Treffry, Governor of the Theological Institution, saying that the state of his health made it necessary for him to become a supernumerary. He had just completed the Jubilee of his ministry, having entered it the year after Wesley's death.

Dr. Bunting: "I think there may be some temptation to become a supernumerary which did not exist before; we must look after this case." The case was left in Dr. Bunting's hands. Mr. T. died about a year later.

The President was directed to visit Scotland at what time he pleases.

Dr. Bunting: "This is not necessary, but it is comely. Methodism is catholic before anything else. We should not now be backward to embrace opportunities of showing 'this spirit.'" This remark was intended to promote fraternisation with the leaders of the Free Church movement.

Dr. Newton notices an instance of catholic spirit in a Scotch minister, who said: "The Methodists have the eye of an insect and the eye of an eagle. John Wesley was the star of the last century which will never set. I have never heard anything at a Methodist meeting, either in prayer or speech, which I could not live and die by."

Dr. Bunting was appointed to accompany the President to Scotland.

Mr. Fowler strongly opposed the appointment of the minister chosen to succeed Mr. Treffry as governor of the Theological Institution. It was strange indeed that those who knew him much more closely than did Mr. Fowler, did not detect his exquisite unfitness for the post. It proved to be a melancholy blunder. The only reply to Mr. Fowler's objection was that "the appointment was for three years only." The nomination was received with marked coldness, but the secretary read on. But the indifference to departmental matters which had ensued on the announced understanding in 1839, that animadversion on official acts, described as "badgering and complaining," should henceforth be "no more" heard, was just as marked in 1841 as in 1839 and 1840. Even the appointment of Mr. Jackson to the theological tutorship was passed without remark and without vote.

An excellent letter, breathing a most Catholic spirit, addressed to the President by the Rev. Mr. Hodgson, a clergyman, was accompanied by a pamphlet containing a plan of reunion with the Methodists, which he had "submitted" to the dignitaries of the Church, and they had received with much condescension.

Mr. Reece: "Such a letter I did not expect to receive from a High Churchman. He places himself where he ought. A letter must be sent to him in the same spirit."

Dr. Beaumont: "I would not have Methodism confined within a clipped hedge. We have our own way, which is the best for us." Others opposed any reference to reunion with the Church.

Mr. Scott: "Mr. Hodgson told me he had no expectation that the subject of union could be practically taken up by the Conference."

Mr. W. M. Bunting: "I know that Mr. Hodgson has an ultimate intention of union. I believe that our union with the Church in any formal way is impracticable."

Dr. Bunting: "My name is ludicrously introduced into the question. The Conference is to blame for this, and I suppose I have some influence in the Body. No person on earth or in heaven—if I may use the language—can reconcile Methodism with High Churchism. I have always said that amalgamation is impossible. I wish the Evangelicals would disavow the Puseyites. When Mr. Wesley was alive something ought to have been done; but not now. We must now maintain a separate and distinct position, and yet hope that the time may come for a more formal union to be effected. But we must look toward the millenium. At present it is not practicable nor, in our circumstances, desirable." (Loud cheers.) "Unless the Church of England will protest against Puseyism in some intelligible form, it will be the duty of the Methodists to protest against the Church of England. I have said this to the first men in the land."

This speech, so interesting on its merits, has much additional importance as a landmark in the history of religion in England. It will be noted that Dr. Bunting divided the Established Church into two great sections—the High Church and the Evangelicals. He knows nothing of the party self-styled *Broad Church*, the party opposed to all definiteness of doctrine, and to the absolute authority of the Holy Scripture as the conclusive standard both of faith and morals. The truth is, the *party* was at that date yet unborn. It was still an embryonic *tendency*. It was not yet a stream, but intermittent ooze and drip. Archbishop Whately has been deserted by this new sect. He was the most determined champion of definite doctrinal teaching in all State-aided schools, and Dr. Kay-Shuttleworth, the giant's armour-bearer, was of the self-same spirit. Let anyone who claims Maurice as a sort of evangelist of the party read the admirable *Educational Magazine*, of which he was at this time the editor. He contends earnestly for catechetical instruction in Christian doctrine as an *essential* element of any sound educational system. Jowett was not yet ordained, and Matthew Arnold was as yet an undergraduate. Can anyone who knew the men who took part in the discussion in Oldham Street chapel in 1841, for a moment doubt that if this aggressive form of specious and seductive encroachment on the authority of Scripture had then shown its front, the protests against it of both sides in the discussion—alike of

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Beaumont and the Buntings—would have been most solemn and determined.

The President : " It is most desirable to direct a debate in a straight line, but I will not put any man down."

Dr. Bunting introduced another matter which greatly agitated the Conference—" the teetotal business." He said : " I think it is a terrible thing to start a new controversy instead of following after peace, as we ought to do in these times."

Mr. McDonald : " I am committed to the question, but with a proper regard to ministerial dignity and fairness."

Dr. Bunting spoke of " the annoyances arising from teetotalism. There are two points on which we must insist : (1) The use of *bond fide* wine in the Lord's Supper ; (2) the not allowing teetotal meetings in our chapels. I question whether we have any legal power to do this. I have spoken of mutual forbearance on this question at former Conferences."

Dr. Beaumont : " I agree with Dr. Bunting that we ought not to allow anything but wine to be drunk at the Lord's Supper. It requires great knowledge to determine whether any beverage is the pure blood of the grape and yet altogether free from *alcohol*."

Mr. Marsden quoted specimens of the intemperate and excited and exciting talk of teetotal advocates. Cornish Methodism was described as in a state of " fermentation " on the subject, and the Rev. W. Burt said : " If a teetotaler be not appointed to Penzance, I fear there will be a division."

Dr. Bunting's points were passed in the form of resolutions, but Dr. Beaumont objected to the closing of our chapels against teetotal meetings, and said that he believed there had been but one case in which any liquid had been substituted for wine in the Lord's Supper.

Dr. Bunting : " I think Dr. Beaumont is mistaken." The resolutions were carried with two dissentients, Dr. Beaumont and S. D. Waddy.

Dr. Bunting : " I would say a word to young men. They should not be tenacious about forms. I wish Mr. S. Waddy would withdraw his honoured hand—it might embarrass his Superintendent. There must be deference to the brethren in this body. It has always been my wish to collect the sense of Conference, and give way in little matters. We may agree on various grounds, but since we agree in the thing, what matters little grounds of disagreement ?"

Mr. Macdonald made remarks in favour of teetotalism.

The President : " We are not enemies to sobriety, but to vituperation. All members of our society are bound to observe the former, and totally abstain from the latter."

Dr. Bunting : " I go a good way with Mr. McDonald and the society to which he belongs. I think there is need in our society for more restriction. It would make good men better and more cautious."

A most irregular brother had been interfering seriously with the comfort and the edification of the participants at the Lord's Supper by unaccountable and perplexing variations in the mode of its administration ; and remarks by Dr. Bunting on the case had struck the Journal secretaries as too valuable to be lightly lost. They had therefore entered them upon the daily record, on the reading of which next morning Dr. Bunting was terribly annoyed. He rose and said : " Why all this made matter of record ? Unless we have more

protection and freedom from the reign of terror in this Conference, you shall never see my face in it again, God helping me! I am distressed exceedingly; it is perfectly unbearable."

No remark was made upon this outburst. The delinquent innovator on the sacramental service was condemned to be a supernumerary for one year, a few hands being lifted in favour of the sentence.

Mr. Fowler: "I object to this sweeping manner of exercising discipline upon a brother."

Dr. Bunting, before proposing that Dr. Newton should still be allowed a young man as his assistant, delivered a strong testimony against any other man than Dr. Newton devoting himself to "the general work." "I think we are too much in the habit of making a sort of ecclesiastical stir, in the getting up of which local men take too much upon themselves. The Superintendent is the only man who used to invite preachers into his Circuit. Notice the lengthiness of placards about chapel openings. It is made a sort of Methodist wake or rush-bearing, and a great many rushlights are puffed as wax candles. I think there should be no going out of a Circuit without the Superintendent's leave, and every Superintendent should learn to utter an animated *No*. Mr. Newton has peculiar gifts for extraneous work, having peculiar endowments and entire freedom from what would be injurious to others. We wish for no apostolic successor in this course."

Mr. W. Bunting: "The bearing of some of the remarks just made is too hard upon an eminent opponent of mine."

Assuredly Dr. Beaumont was neither a rushlight nor a wax-light, but a gleaming, flashing star on the Master's own right hand.

Dr. Bunting gave notice that he would apply at the next Centenary Fund Committee for money to build a residence for the President. This was moved, seconded, and hastily put after 9 p.m. About one-sixth of the few hands present were held up for it.

In the Daily Record next morning it was said to have been "carried unanimously that a house be bought or built as a residence for the President."

J. Fowler suggested that a regular order and form of inquiries to be proposed at District Meetings should be drawn up and authenticated by the Conference.

This was adopted unanimously; and Dr. Bunting suggested that Mr. Fowler should draw up the plan and submit it to Mr. Grindrod and Mr. Keeling. He added: "I am said to be the great fault-finder, but Mr. Fowler is far ahead of me in that line."

This was very wholesome pleasantry, but "fault-mender" would have been a better word. This originated the most useful little manual, *The Order and Form of Business*, etc.



Mr. S. D. Waddy : " I think the *Journals of Conference* should be in safe custody."

Mr. Reece : " Permission to inspect them should not be a matter of private friendship."

Dr. Bunting : " I think the key of the safe should be in the hands of the President."

Much dissatisfaction and unhappy feeling was occasioned by the action in the case of a leading layman. He had married his brother's widow. The committee to which the case was referred recommended the condemnation of the act.

Mr. Galland asked : " Is there any law in the New Testament or rule of the Methodist society which condemns this union ? "

Mr. W. M. Bunting : " We had better take Mr. Wesley's view of the case than that of the committee."

Dr. Bunting : " The decision of the committee is advisable. Such usage is not comely. I never gave a vote with more satisfaction than I shall do in this case."

Mr. Powell : " I think that the Conference should take time to consider a question which has never been determined by the Conference, especially as strong difference of view exists among us. Mr. Galland's and Mr. William Bunting's point of our founder's own judgment on the subject should at least be met."

Dr. Bunting : " I think we are prepared to vote."

The vote was forthwith taken. About half the hands being held up, it was decided to be carried.

A series of strongly condemnatory opinions of the Conference was published in the *Minutes*, and thus the Wesleyan Methodist Connexion was agitated by the identical problem which had disturbed the peace of England and of Continental Christendom more than three centuries before.

Mr. Grindrod : " I have drawn up a compendium of laws and regulations of the body, and wish permission to publish."

Dr. Bunting : " I hope this will be a preparatory work for something drawn up with great deliberation and with the authority of Conference."

It was hinted that the *Pastoral address* was too long.

Dr. Bunting : " I have never been able to sympathise with those who call for brevity."

Mr. W. M. Bunting : " I would have some of the obituary passages left out, and Sabbath obligation brought out more prominently. I approve of the recognition of the ecclesiastical principles of the New Testament."

Dr. Bunting stated that the deed of the Centenary Hall secured that, if used for religious services, no other doctrine should be taught in it but those of our legal standards.

## LONDON CONFERENCE OF 1842.

The Conference of 1842 was held in London under the Presidency of Dr. Hannah. The Secretary, Dr. Newton, was summoned home the same day by the fatal illness of a daughter ; Mr. Scott was asked to take his place.

Dr. Bunting, on a motion for a committee of inquiry on an important matter, said : " It is the duty of any brother moving for a committee to nominate its members, and fix the time of meeting."

Dr. Bunting announced that the health of a probationer of the brightest promise—John Smetham (eldest brother of the artist), stationed in the Lambeth Circuit—had so completely broken down as to compel his retirement from the work.

Mr. Galland, who knew him well, suggested that a letter of condolence should be sent him from the brethren, and Mr. Scott, the acting Secretary of the Conference, asked permission to perform that duty, since he felt that he could do it with all the tenderness of a personal friend.

The letter was no mere official document, but a gem of Christian correspondence, which soothed the last days of a sadly shortened life, and poured balm into the hearts of the bereaved.

Dr. Bunting, on announcing the name of Theophilus Woolmer as a candidate from the London District, said : " He is a youth of rare maturity, ready for any work, at home or abroad."

Dr. Bunting, on the proposing of another minister's son by his own father, said : " We should be careful on the point. I have the honour of a son in the ministry, whom it would have fallen to my duty to propose, but I thought it not honourable, delicate, or just to him or to me."

On the morning of the second day J. Fowler noticed the importance of having a day set apart for consideration of our present position, there having been a decrease in Great Britain of 2,065. He also dwelt on the importance of avoiding hurried *legislation* through putting off the weightiest matters to the close, when the Conference was thinned and jaded and impatient to get home. Dr. Beaumont strongly emphasised both these points.

Dr. Bunting spoke very strongly against men running away from Conference directly after ordination to be married.

Mr. Atherton inquired whether the chairman of Districts had notified to the President the Circuits from which all the preachers were present.

President : " I have had no notification of the kind."

Dr. Bunting : " I think this a very serious subject, but the matter is hurriedly brought forward by Mr. A. Let us know who are here without leave, and the matter be brought forward again."

G. B. offered for the mission-field ; has a matrimonial engagement.

Dr. Bunting : " If a man thinks that he is called to the mission work, he is not therefore called to have a matrimonial engagement."

Cries of " Put his name down."

Dr. Bunting : " Then tell him the truth : that his name is put down out of compliment."

Another brother was stated to "have an impression in favour of the home work."

Dr. Bunting: "I wish those who use this phrase would write a pamphlet on *Impressions*. Impressions are not the rule of conduct. A man who objects to the mission work is not devoted to the work of God, but to the home work."

Dr. Beaumont: "Not to every man is this grace given to preach among the Gentiles."

Dr. Bunting: "I think if Dr. Beaumont were to pray for it, he might receive grace enough to be Bishop of New Zealand."

(This new bishopric was then under discussion, and Mr. T. Jackson's son became the Bishop designate.)

Dr. Beaumont: "I can most honestly and heartily return that compliment. No one would make a more superb Bishop *in partibus infidelium* than would Dr. Bunting. I am willing to go wherever my brethren think that I can best serve the cause. But I would not promise to put on a Bishop's robe."

Dr. Bunting: "I offered myself for India; my heart was there. But as I was not sent, the grace was taken from me."

Dr. Beaumont: "Those who refused to let Dr. Bunting go to India incurred a very grave responsibility."

Dr. Bunting: "This is too personal."

Dr. Beaumont: "Not more personal than the remark which called it forth."

Dr. Bunting: "Many preachers err by choosing their own appointments, as the event proves."

A candidate strongly recommended by Mr. R. Wood had been a minister in the New Connexion, but had been refused his certificate of approval from the Quarterly Meeting.

Dr. Bunting: "We should not take him without further inquiry." The case of a well-educated candidate provoked a long discussion.

Mr. W. M. Bunting remarked that the character contained nothing sufficiently distinctive to mark him out for the ministry rather than a consecrated secular life.

Mr. Galland (who had seen a good deal of him) intimated that this was just what the man himself seemed to be lacking in, and recommended that he should "remain as and where he is" till some more satisfying manifestations of character should come to light.

Mr. Reece: "I am surprised that we should hesitate so long upon this case. The testimonies even place him in a very exceptionable light before the Conference; as if any amount of talent could fit a man for the ministry without decisive evidence of a strong Christian character!"

Happily for Methodism, he was not accepted.

Another candidate of superior educational advantages had passed the District Meeting against the judgment of some of his competent triers. The Chairman said: "The long and short of the matter is, he has not paid the attention to the study of our doctrines which he might have done, and ought to have done." A very effective minister said that he seemed defective in fire

and life as well as light. Mr. Scott: "Want of interest in and acquaintance with our doctrines as a candidate for our ministry is a very grave objection."

During the reading of the obituaries of ministers, Dr. Bunting took occasion to remark: "I think that, as a Body, we have too strong a tendency to guard the Gospel. I am of Rowland Hill's opinion: 'Better leave the Gospel to guard itself. Let us preach the *whole*.'" An obituary described a brother's manner in the pulpit.

Dr. Bunting said: "That is more fit for the *Wesleyan Takings* than the *Minutes*." The Editor was requested to correct it.

Dr. Bunting truly said of winsome, good John Walmsley: "He preached the Gospel because he *felt* it in its all-sufficiency."

The most touching scene during this Conference was that which followed on the reading of the character of Joseph Entwisle. Richard Reece rose up and told the Conference how, this time fifty-five years ago, Mr. Wesley had sent out from places wide apart two young men to the same city, Oxford. One of them was not yet one-and-twenty; the other was a few months older. Their names were Joseph Entwisle and Richard Reece. "It was a rambling Circuit, which took six weeks to get round. Then as ever, Mr. Entwisle was mild and gentle, on his lips and in his heart was the law of kindness."

The foregoing Conference had decided a brother should make an apology to an aggrieved party for improper conduct; or that his name should be dropped. The apology was deemed unsatisfactory. A committee was appointed. It was asked that he should be sent for.

Dr. Bunting: "No! Let him come if he pleases. If a man makes an appeal it must be at his own expense, not that of the Contingent Fund." His offence was the having given a young lady sufficient reason to believe that he intended matrimony and then retreated. He was condemned to begin his probation afresh, and not to make any fresh engagements for three years to come.

A very gentlemanly brother had been charged by his District Meeting with having used unseemly language towards, and having unconstitutionally expelled, a local preacher. Against this he appealed.

Mr. Dixon: "Brother — has been wickedly used. If he has acted unconstitutionally, he has had abundant provocation. I am sorry that he has been betrayed into angry expressions, and do not see how the District Meeting could have come to any other decision."

Dr. Bunting: "I must enter some protest against Mr. Dixon's doctrine. I do not see how the case could be so fully, justly, and impartially before him as before the District Meeting. We must uphold our proper tribunals. Cross-examination is a very important thing."

Mr. Dixon: "I imputed no blame to the District Meeting or its decision, but, on the contrary, expressly approved of both. But is the endeavour to extenuate the fault of a brother overtaken in a fault a matter to be *protested*

*against* as an attack upon our proper tribunals? I did not profess to know the case as well as the District Meeting did; but if unlimited correspondence can put a man in possession of the facts, I know it pretty well." The Appellant: "I withdraw my appeal at Mr. Dixon's desire."

After the question: "Any objection against S. D. Waddy?" Dr. Beaumont said: "I wish to inquire whether the Chairman's 'No' acquits Mr. Waddy of having since the last Conference worn a gown during his discharge of ministerial duty?"

Mr. Reece: "I think that Mr. Waddy can say 'Ay' or Nay."

Mr. S. D. Waddy: "I must decline on conscientious grounds. I approve of the rule on a friendly ground; but the man who pertinaciously refused to give a direct answer shall have no answer from me."

Mr. Powell: "Then I will ask the question."

Dr. Bunting: "Let Mr. Powell first put the question privately. We have not repealed the New Testament rule."

One would have liked to be one of the "one or two more" when Mr. Powell popped the question on the second time of asking.

Samuel Dunn came once more before the Conference; but this time in a new character; not for insubordination to his Superintendent, but for intemperate administration as a Superintendent. His District Meeting had found him guilty of (1) an arbitrary mode of conducting the Quarterly Meeting, and introducing questions which did not belong to it. (2) Of applying novel and unauthorised tests to the lay officials of the Circuit. (3) Packing the Quarterly Meeting in order to carry his policy. (4) Of arbitrarily dissolving the Quarterly Meeting when he found that he could not carry it.

The chairman of the District explained that the special object of his overstretching of authority was the gentleman who had come to the rescue in the last great agitation and saved to the Connexion its chapels: Mr. Cox (father of the three ministers, John G., Josiah, and Stephen Cox). A specially irritating element in this application of novel and unwarrantable tests, was that all this time he wrapped himself in an impenetrable cloud. It was stated by another able minister that the District Meeting had treated him with the utmost tenderness. When the Chairman handed him the resolutions he dropped them on the floor, and walked out of the meeting.

Although he had been in London during the whole time of its session, he had not entered Conference.

Dr. Bunting: "I would propose a committee to look over the resolutions, and request Mr. Dunn's attendance." (Agreed.) Mr. Dunn, on appearing

in the Conference, inquired why the letters he had sent through the ex-President had not been read to the Conference?

Dr. Dixon: "I refrained from reading them because I thought they would prejudice Mr. Dunn's case."

Mr. Dunn: "Has not a brother a right to be heard in Conference if he request it?" Answer: "After the committee have had the letters before them they may come before the Conference." Mr. Dunn: "I would meet three individuals, if Dr. Bunting was one of them."

Dr. Bunting: "I think Mr. Dunn's proposition is unreasonable, to create a new tribunal; keep to our constitutional method. We should stand by the District Meeting. He pleads that he stands by our rules and usages; let him do so in this instance." Mr. Dunn: "I call Dr. Bunting to order. I have suffered much, and expect to suffer more. If my appeal to the Conference is denied, I will have nothing more to do with it. I am prepared for the consequence."

Dr. Bunting: "I would add two others to the committee on Mr. Dunn's nomination." Dr. Beaumont: "I think that, as a Methodist preacher, Mr. Dunn has no other course but to submit to the committee appointed by his brethren." Mr. Dunn: "I will not name anyone. This is my deliberate, decided, final opinion." Mr. Galland: "Would it not be well to allow Mr. Dunn a little time to think?" The President: "I approve of this suggestion." Mr. Dunn: "I have had sufficient time for decision, and what I have said is my final decision."

Mr. Fowler notes here: "Mr. Dunn's conduct was the most indefensible I ever saw or heard of; most discourteous to the Conference."

The committee met, but Mr. Dunn would not appear before it. The committee was to meet again, with or without Mr. Dunn, as soon as Mr. Dixon had received the papers left behind. The ultimate report of the committee condemned him, and confirmed the decision of the District Meeting. It suggested that some admonition should be addressed to Mr. Dunn, but Mr. Dunn kept as far aloof from Conference as from committee. He "dared depart in sullen grandeur home," setting at defiance with impunity alike his brethren and his people. In this respect he outdid Everett himself. Like bold and cunning chess-players, they had given to the game an unexpected, awkward turn, and cried Check, and quietly awaited the counter-move of the opponent. For his part, Everett, seeing that he had baffled Conference, and weakened and worsened its position on the board, pursued a very clever, comfortable policy. He had been three years at York, and was once more weary of the itinerancy and Circuit work. His biographer informs us: "Experience had taught him that he could render a larger amount of service to the Connexion provided he could regulate his own labours,

He believed he would be able to do more work, and labour for a longer period, by sitting down. His services were in great demand and his engagements numerous." (Chew's "Everett," pp. 344, 345.)

The Conference must have felt as foolish as it looked when it found itself shut up to allow the irrepressible James Everett to "sit down" to his "*career* as a supernumerary." A more descriptive word could not have been supplied by Johnson, for he went *carcering* over the country, as the best treatment for that strange form of clerical sore throat which absolutely demands incessant change of air and large, excited, and exciting audiences. That this down-sitting was not sedentary may be seen from his own description: "During the last four weeks I have travelled more than one thousand miles, and preached between twenty and thirty occasional sermons, and delivered half that number of public addresses. Praise God." (Ibid.) Many a poor Methodist preacher, trudging along the country roads, would have sung a devout doxology over such a career of sitting down as that. He adds: "Having been relieved from the general drag of the work, I have been enabled to help the Church by excursions to different places. Praise the Lord!"

The Conference inducted Mr. Everett into the second stadium of his arduous sitting-down career in a puzzled silence, as far from ease as dignity. They evidently felt "least said soonest mended."

It was announced that H. C. had retired and become a Chartist lecturer. Poor C., "by that wrong tack he lost his course, and his after-life was bound in shallows and in miseries."

Dr. Bunting remarked upon the case of an utterly unmanageable brother: "We can account for his case on a theory of our own. I do not believe that we can bring him to observe our discipline. The less notice we take of him the better. I would leave his name off the Minutes."

Very wise advice this, upon the then existing evidence.

A special District Meeting had been called with regard to disturbances in Louth. Good John Hanwell had tried to do for Louth what Dr. Bunting had hoped that Mr. Reece would do for Hull—namely, break up the immemorial usage of reading to the Leaders' meeting the names of new members. The Superintendent was entirely exculpated. Thus began the disturbances in Louth, which in 1849 rose to such a

disastrous pitch. The *subject* was left over to be taken up with miscellaneous matters. And a most *miscellaneous* matter it turned out to be.

A most interesting episode in this Conference was the introduction, at the request of Dr. Bunting, of two distinguished German clergymen, the venerable Dr. Steinpkoff and the Rev. Mr. Sydow, Chaplain to the King of Prussia.

Dr. Steinpkoff: "The labours of the Wesleyan Methodists are known and appreciated on the Continent. We pray God that you may be strengthened in your inner man to still resist and bear testimony against the evils of the time, especially Rationalism and Popery. It is only the oneness of the faith which gives importance and reality to the oneness of the body. And it must be a simple faith in Scripture truth. It is of great moment that courteous and affectionate relations should be maintained between believers in Germany and the British Methodists. There is now a powerful body of the young ministers in Prussia who are determined to know nothing among men but Jesus Christ and Him crucified. We are becoming a great Missionary Church. I have been connected with the German mission. When I joined the German Evangelical Missionary Society it was very small; but I have met in London with 200 German evangelical missionaries, on their way to and from their stations in different parts of the world."

The President made some apposite remarks on the indebtedness of Methodism to Germany, of Wesley's obligations to Luther's exposition, and to the Moravian ministers.

Mr. Sydow referred to the decline of evangelical religion in Germany through the prevalence of Rationalism, Naturalism, and Utilitarianism. "*Rationalism* began in the colleges with the professors, and thence, through the students, into the pulpits and the homes of all classes of society. Through this, error in almost every form, even to the extent of various shapes of Atheism, has extensively prevailed.

"The Rationalists deny the *authoritative* inspiration of the Scriptures. They strangely wish to connect themselves with the religion whose foundations they undermine. They explain away the supernatural element in the Scriptures and in Christianity. In this way infidelity has spread most widely, till very little is known of spiritual religion. The political elements in the Church have greatly aggravated the mischief. But within the last twenty or thirty years another spirit has begun to spread, and a more happy state of things has been growing up. Scriptural Christianity has been revived, and faith in Christian doctrine is more common. Our seats of learning are not abandoned to Rationalism; men of learning are not ashamed of supernatural Christianity. And a corresponding change has taken place among the educated classes. The old king had no sympathy with Rationalism. Methodism is exciting interest in our country. The literature of your Centenary celebration and the reported speeches have done great good in Germany. You have many features in common with the Pietism of our country, which has been of such great service to our churches. Besides, you seem to have what we most want: discipline, order, and the right and power of self-regulation. The Church of Christ should not be



open to political influence. There should be no intermeddling, on one side or the other, of the Church with politics, or politics with the Church. I do not see how you could address us with a view to establish fraternal relations between British Methodism and Evangelical Protestantism in Germany. In our country the king is the supreme bishop, though he may not administer the sacraments. But now the higher classes in Germany, and especially our beloved king, again believe in supernatural religion. You have repaid your obligations to Germany. It is your inspiring example which awoke in us missionary zeal. Our old king will struggle against Rationalism, Neology, and Popery. In spirit he is Christian and kingly. The brethren who have separated from our Established Church are of a very Catholic spirit, are fond of unity, and have separated in a spirit of love, and have been a great blessing to the Established Church. I should have been glad to compare notes with you on the Scriptural theology of the inner life—justification, regeneration, sanctification—but my knowledge of English is too imperfect."

Mr. Fowler suggested that the German brethren should be invited to remain during the theological examination of the candidates, and many voices expressed strong approval. But Dr. Bunting seriously questioned this, so the matter dropped. Dr. Steinpkoff retired; but Mr. Sydow, felicitously misunderstanding Dr. Bunting's demur, remained a little longer.

This voice from the land of Luther and of Peter Böhler, addressing Wesley's preachers in Wesley's own chapel upon the subject of their mission, fifty-one years after his decease, was very striking and impressive; and even now, seven years after the celebration of the centenary of his death, is not without a warning and arousing message to those on whom devolves the glorious, solemn task of carrying on the work which they so steadfastly advanced.

The theological examination was vigorously conducted, as was to be expected the first time that a theological tutor occupied the Presidential chair. But Mr. Fowler felt it "tiresome," as serving rather to set forth the views of the examiner than to ascertain the soundness and proficiency of the candidates themselves. This might be partly due to the presence of a stranger who was wishful to be made sure of our precise doctrinal position. But it arose in some degree from the fact that only two besides the President took part in the investigation—Dr. Bunting and his sensitive and subtle-minded son; not that their deliverances were pointless or irrelevant. On the contrary, they were the weightiest utterances of all. The President had defined transmitted guilt as "obligation to suffer" on account of our first parents' sin.

Dr. Bunting: "Not only obligation to suffer but actual suffering, not only in physical mortality but, what is worse than any bodily infliction, a nature which God cannot look upon with complacency, but must look on with positive displeasure, so that the very best of us 'were by nature the children of wrath, even as others.' Man's nature is depraved, however education may restrain it. We must all preach the broad, deep doctrine of man's sinful nature, and the equally broad, deep doctrine of the Divine and all-sufficient remedy. We cannot preach it too freely if we preach it fully. Leave the guarding to itself and to the Spirit. Only make men understand that there is 'no other name given under heaven among men whereby we must be saved,' and press home the question: 'How shall we escape, if we neglect so great salvation?'"

The President: "I wish Dr. Bunting would lay me and the Conference under still greater obligation by further deliverances of this kind."

Mr. W. M. Bunting: "If you do not mind, you will countenance the error that men are born justified, and not justified by faith."

Dr. Bunting: "The passage, 'The free gift came unto all men unto justification,' does not imply innate justification."

The President: "The antithesis in the text may be maintained, if we had time to go into it."

It need not have taken much time to clear this very important matter to anyone who had read Fletcher, or had duly studied the passage in the Greek.

Practically, Dr. Bunting's position was impregnable, but it was a great pity that the exegetic point was not put with more precision, so that Bunting senior and Bunting junior might have been brought into perfect sympathy.

The question of the Divine authority and sanctity of the Christian Sabbath was appropriately dwelt upon in the presence of the German minister. For more than half a century the Fatherland has been vainly striving to recover and enjoy the Sabbaths of which it had let itself be cheated by a crude and shallow but pretentious criticism. And unless Great Britain guards itself against the same critical cajolery, we shall find ourselves floundering in the same unwholesome swamp.

Dr. Beaumont: "I wish to know if these young brethren are entering our ministry not as a passport to some other but to preach our doctrines and to work our system so long as they can say with truthfulness that they 'believe and preach our doctrines'; and should they cease to believe and preach them, not to misuse our pulpits for the preaching of something else until they find some comfortable call elsewhere." The candidates were interrogated on these points, and all gave the required pledge. Dr. Beaumont: "I wish that the charge could be delivered immediately after the ordination. I think the interruption in the service is a pity."

Who is to discountenance improper books? The proprietary don't. Whatever Governor or Chaplain you may appoint, his unpopularity will be in proportion to his faithfulness. I have not sufficient tact. I am too anxious and too young of standing. They dispute my knowledge of Methodist law, and attribute my adherence to it to a love of power."

Dr. Bunting: "I have seen a man who talked about the expenses of the school in the offensive terms which Mr. McLean has quoted."

Mr. S. Waddy: "I have never heard of this before, and will make no reply."

Mr. Waddy was at that time resident in Bath.

Mr. Galland: "I spoke as a shareholder. I was not aware of the defectiveness of the deed. I had nothing to do with drawing up the deed, but found it in operation. Make a suitable appointment for one year."

Dr. Bunting: "I agree with Mr. Galland. There is a great difference between originating a system and finding it in operation. I would throw out a resolution: That, under all the perplexities of the case, we will appoint a Governor for this one year in the hope that the proposed changes will be made."

Mr. R. Wood: "If no dividend is paid, and there is, as stated, a debt of £13,000, how is it that the report says nothing about the item of interest on that sum?"

Answer: "That is included under the item 'incidental expenses.'"

Mr. McLean showed that certain heavy drains upon the funds belonged much more legitimately to that enormous item than did the interest upon deliberately borrowed money. "Ministers would be invited for various occasional purposes, and were entertained as long as they might wish to stop. Sometimes parents would save hotel expenses for a week or a fortnight together by boarding and lodging at the school. Out of these financial difficulties has grown a fierce attack upon Wesleyan Methodism. I heard one director cry out at the top of his voice: 'We have nothing to do with the Conference.' Of course the only answer to that was: 'Then Conference has nothing to do with you.'"

In the course of this discussion a difference of memory between Dr. Bunting on the one hand and Mr. Dixon on the other led to a new arrangement and appointment by the Conference.

Dr. Bunting maintained that the deed of Sheffield school misstated the decision of Conference with regard to the Governor. Mr. Dixon maintained that it did not. The Journal, being consulted, confirmed the accuracy of Mr. Dixon's recollection.

Dr. Bunting: "The Journal contains many mistakes. No one man is competent to keep the Journal accurately." He therefore moved that Dr. Newton, Mr. Jackson, and Mr. Scott should be a committee to verify the Journal daily before it be read to Conference. This was carried.

Mr. Haswell refused to be the colleague of Mr. McLean on the ground that he had voted in favour of Church rates.

Dr. Bunting: "The question of the Superintendency of any Circuit should not be matter of talk amongst the ministers and people, but should be left entirely to Conference. Young men should not be invited to Conference."

A request was made by Mr. Scott for a young man to assist Mr. W. M. Bunting for one year. Dr. Bunting remarked: "Our existing system requires a man either to starve or work himself to death. Many valuable lives have been lost by this alternative." The young man was granted.

The Committee on Methodism in Scotland recommended that the understanding about the gown should not apply to Scotland.

Mr. Powell: "I wish for time to consider this proposal. I think the people should be consulted in the matter."

Mr. Dixon: "I would ask if we are to legislate according to the wish and judgment and taste of the people?"

Dr. Newton: "I travelled thirty-eight years ago in Scotland, and wore bands and gown. I believe if *Wesleyan* Methodism is acted on in Scotland, in six months a very beneficial change will follow. If I was appointed to Scotland, I should ask permission to wear gown and bands."

Mr. Atherton: "When I was stationed in Scotland no minister was allowed to administer the sacraments unless he had been ordained by imposition of hands. I was thus ordained."

Mr. J. McOwan: "Gown and bands will do very little towards reviving or relieving. Get rid of the chapel debts that have done so much mischief, and get the people to meet in Class."

Mr. Rule: "I would ask if we are a Church? If we are regular Presbyters of our own Church? If so, we ought to have the proper vestments."

Dr. Bunting: "The best way to make Christians on either side the Tweed is to preach experimentally. The reason why people do not meet in Class, both in England and in Scotland, is because they do not like to be put under spiritual supervision of Leaders or of Ministers, and into close spiritual connection with a spiritual Church. There is no lay-elder in the Church of Scotland. The elders, teaching or ruling, are all ordained. I think the gown and bands should be granted in Scotland. We care nothing about gowns, but we are not restricted. I have been presented, as a precious relic, with the bands of C. Wesley. These are not times to blink our orders; we claim to be true ministers. We must maintain the claim not by bespattering every clergyman who chooses to be a bigot, but by doing the work."

Mr. Reece made a long speech against the gown.

Mr. Dixon: "The ministerial costume was worn by Mr. Wesley; yet he was no Puseyite. There is a more friendly feeling between the Church of Scotland and the Methodists. Why preach in the Church of Scotland in a gown and in our chapel without one?"

The motion for the use of vestments in Scotland was carried by a large majority; about eight hands against it.

Dr. Bunting: "I would have the question, for the present, at least, confined to Scotland and the Sheffield school. I think we are not sufficiently solemn in our administration of ordinances. Immediately after a hallowing sermon we begin to sing in order to induce a few more to stay to the prayer-meeting."

It is worth noting that the two questions came before the Conference fifty-five years ago which have lately been made the subject of discussion in the papers—the difference between

Wesleyan Methodism and Presbyterianism, and the status of a ruling elder. It is a staring blunder, impossible to anyone who has looked into the matter, to suppose that the Wesleyan Methodist idea of the Christian pastorate is identical with that of historical Presbyterianism. One immense and most important difference is that the Wesleyan Methodist idea is clear, consistent, and intelligible; that of historical and contemporary Presbyterianism is opaque, confused, self-contradictory to a hopeless degree. The highest Presbyterian authorities are at variance upon the subject of the classification and the category of the ruling elder as to whether he is a layman or not. He is *certainly not a minister*, either in the Scottish or the Wesleyan Methodist sense of that term. He is not required to preach in public. He is, on the other hand, not only not forbidden but *obliged* to get an honest living as he can, seeing that he has no stipend, salary, maintenance, allowances, or sustentation. In the *Conferential* sense of the word the ruling elder is a layman. And for the purposes and bearing of the gown-discussion he is more a layman than the vergier. A ruling elder may not wear the gown, though he may on an emergency take the pulpit.

Dr. Beaumont was not present, having been called home towards the close of the Conference. He could have thrown light upon the subject, having been stationed at Glasgow in his early ministry, and having been Superintendent of the Edinburgh Circuit and chairman of the District for three years. As an appropriate sequel, the first address from the Scotch Kirk to the Wesleyan Methodist Conference was received and read.

The Conference did not find time for a conversation on the decrease, although it sat till the Saturday evening of the third week; and there had been a financial falling off corresponding to the numerical declension. Mr. Fowler tried his best to bring it on after the reading of the pastoral address; but Dr. Bunting deprecated much talking about it. He justly said that the only remedy was very patent—more earnest evangelical preaching, more effective spiritual intercourse with our people, and the steering clear of politics. "I know that the King of Prussia has been told something of our decrease." Nevertheless, he insisted: "We should tell our people in the Pastoral address of a sad falling off in numbers and in other respects."

The non-devotement of a single session to a conversation

on the state of the Connexion was much to be regretted. Mr. Fowler's suggestion to that effect was met by the remark: "If we keep to business, we shall have time enough for that." But this condition was, unhappily, lost sight of. As in some former Conferences, the temporary absence of Dr. Bunting brought business to a standstill, or reduced it to a talking against time till he should reappear. At another time Mr. Fowler enters: "During a great part of the session there was nothing done or attempted."

The address of Bishop Soule, besides its many interesting details, contained some points of special weight. He said: "I wish the principles of original Methodism may never be interrupted, much less left behind. I have no interest disconnected from Wesleyan Methodism. The Methodists are a *witnessing* Church. I find an indescribable oneness of spirit with this Conference. There are many erroneous notions respecting the democracy of American Methodism which it is important to have corrected. There are two points of difference between American and English Methodism which involve a principle: (1) You give your laity a power to veto the receiving of new members; with us they rest entirely with the ministry. (2) We have an ordination of deacons, elders, and bishops; but we have only two *orders*. A bishop is but an officer in the order of elders. A Preacher is ordained deacon when received into full Connexion. A bishop cannot disfranchise without the consent of Conference. The appointment of ministers, though in the hands of the bishops, is not arbitrary, and is not a lottery. We stand under one immutable principle: Individual convenience must be given up to general good. I have been a bishop eighteen years, and have given thousands of appointments, and have only met with one man who said: 'I cannot go.' Once I was reading out the stations, and read what was considered the worst Circuit. The brother appointed said: 'Thank God, I am accounted worthy.' It would be impossible for us to carry on our tremendous itinerancy if the bishops did not labour, travel, and suffer more than the others. I have frequently slept on the ground in Indian wigwams, but I would not turn my hand for the difference between that and the best accommodation. The believing soul is not dependent for its happiness on circumstances. If the day should come when even the bishops will be located, our system will be at an end. But the bishops' power has checks. We are responsible to Conference. If I see a Circuit suffering from defective administration, I can lay my hands on any man suitable and transplant him to that place. When the stations are once read in Conference there is no appeal. It is obligatory on all our members to attend Class. If they neglect, they are subject to admonition. If this be the only fault, we bear long with them. But if they still neglect Class, we exclude them. We do not create officers unnecessarily. We ordain local preachers to the office of deacon, and sometimes to the office of elder, but never to that of presiding elder. There is not a perfect uniformity of usage as to the ordaining of local Preachers. But all the local Preachers are amenable to the Quarterly Meetings."

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Wesleyan Methodism and Presbyterianism, and the status of a ruling elder. It is a staring blunder, impossible to anyone who has looked into the matter, to suppose that the Wesleyan Methodist idea of the Christian pastorate is identical with that of historical Presbyterianism. One immense and most important difference is that the Wesleyan Methodist idea is clear, consistent, and intelligible; that of historical and contemporary Presbyterianism is opaque, confused, self-contradictory to a hopeless degree. The highest Presbyterian authorities are at variance upon the subject of the classification and the category of the ruling elder as to whether he is a layman or not. He is *certainly not a minister*, either in the Scottish or the Wesleyan Methodist sense of that term. He is not required to preach in public. He is, on the other hand, not only not forbidden but *obliged* to get an honest living as he can, seeing that he has no stipend, salary, maintenance, allowances, or sustentation. In the *Conferential* sense of the word the ruling elder is a layman. And for the purposes and bearing of the gown-discussion he is more a layman than the vergier. A ruling elder may not wear the gown, though he may on an emergency take the pulpit.

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and Woodhouse Grove that during the year the *religious* instruction of the boys had not been attended to so carefully as heretofore, a committee was appointed to look into the matter. It "strongly recommended that more *vigorous* religious teaching should be given at both schools." The Conference accordingly made P. McOwan and S. D. Waddy responsible for seeing that this was done at Kingswood, and F. A. West and A. Barrett for securing it at Woodhouse Grove. A better selection could not possibly be made. It was decided that a letter should be sent to the Louth Leaders' Meeting, pointing out the impropriety of its insisting on the submitting the names of the new members to the Leaders' Meeting. Mr. Galland, who had laboured on the ground, said : "I would have the explanation cautiously worded, lest we should appear to be infringing upon the liberties of the people."

A most important caution this ! It is a very difficult and delicate affair to deprive a Church Court of a right which it has been allowed to exercise for more than forty years. I happened to preach in Louth just after the decision was made known, and saw clearly that it would not make for peace.

Dr. Bunting : "The American principle of suffering no member to exclude himself is a good one."

Great pains were taken with the American Address, which was drawn up by Drs. Bunting and Alder, Scott and Jackson, and the senior Editor.

It is to be noted that this was the Conference at which the most befitting usage was adopted of reading a portion of Scripture before entering on the business of the day. Mr. Duncan, in alluding to his honourable reception by the General Assembly of the Kirk of Scotland, had dwelt upon the utility and impressiveness of this observance.

It is matter of surprise that no mention is made in the Life of Dr. Bunting of this very interesting and, in some points, memorable London Conference. This, of course, is owing to the straitness of the lessening space. Yet this Conference greatly strengthened his legitimate and beneficial influence ; and that by force of gentleness and moderation. He was evidently in a subdued and chastened mood. When it was moved "that some admonition be addressed to Mr. Dunn, and that he be exhorted to conduct himself with propriety in the future," Dr. Bunting pleaded for the leaving out of the "admonition." He added, "Perhaps something may be due to his standing. He makes no



difference between great things and small ; and makes as much sacrifice for the one as for the other. I think his conduct most indiscreet ; I do not know what is meant by abstract theories. The best way is to be guided by circumstances." Dr. Bunting carried this last rule of action much too far at times.

But in one of the discussions, in his eagerness to secure an object upon which his heart was set—which was indeed most desirable if it could have been accomplished lawfully—Dr. Bunting took up one of those untenable and perilous positions which too oft exposed both him and Conference to the gravest dangers. He said "Adapt your principles to your exigencies." Mr. Fowler immediately gave utterance to his entire dissent from such a maxim of administration for the guidance of the Pastorate ; whilst he disclaimed all opposition to the proposal itself, if it could be rightly met.

This certainly was as neat and portable a formulation of the doctrine of expediency and opportunism as could well be devised.

It was an inauspicious fact, however, that two popular ministers were with impunity setting Conference authority at naught.

#### THE SHEFFIELD CONFERENCE OF 1843.

This Conference was held in Sheffield, under the mild, sagacious Presidency of the Rev. John Scott.

Mr. Vevers complained of the extravagantly complimentary strain in which some documents were drawn up.

Dr. Bunting: "We should cultivate simplicity of style in the Minutes. We say things which we would not say at the Market Cross. We want more of the scissors and less of the pen in getting up the Minutes. Above all, we should not compliment one another in prayer to Almighty God." Dr. Beaumont expressed his agreement with Dr. Bunting in the use of the scissors rather than the pen. "I doubt the good taste of much that is allowed to appear in our Minutes. We should not be quintessentially polite in print."

Dr. Bunting: "I had rather have a soldier than a doctor for a Governor. We must have more discipline in our Institutions."

Mr. T. Jackson having resigned his post as letter-writer, Dr. Newton moved, and Dr. Bunting seconded, that Mr. Fowler should be appointed in his place.

Dr. Bunting made some pleasantries about J. F., to the great amusement of the Conference. The Conference clamoured for the appointment, and, in spite of all I could say, I was obliged to submit.

An important conversation arose out of a Minute, from the Nottingham and Derby District, of inquiry touching the

authorisation of instructions sent out by London committees. A similar resolution was passed by the Birmingham District to the following effect : " That this meeting is at a loss to know by what authority these inquiries are made and these instructions given, and with what authority they are clothed." This was moved by Edward Walker, seconded by John Topham, and unanimously passed. That such steadfast, loyal men as Edward Walker and John Topham, and such large and well-manned Districts as Nottingham and Derby, and Birmingham and Shrewsbury, should have sent up to Conference resolutions like these was amongst the many indications of an upgrowing mistrust lest a Metropolitan Administration should unduly influence the Connexional Administration.

Dr. Bunting noticed the fact of Wesleyan ministers opposing their sons going abroad. " One candidate refuses to go abroad unmarried. So long as he has no wife the heathen people must have no Gospel."

The most affecting obituary of the year was that of Thomas Galland, who had been cut off in the midst of his years and labours. No satisfactory characterisation having been prepared, Thomas Jackson and James Dixon were requested to perform this service. The death of Galland at this time was a Connexional calamity. He was one of the steady, mediating forces in the Conference, equally regardful of the rights of Pastorate and people.

Mr. Vevers thought it proper to notice the petition in favour of the Scotch Church.

Dr. Beaumont : " I think it should be the individual act of everyone who signs ; and that, as a Conference, the less we intermeddle with the disputes of other Churches the better."

Conference discreetly took Dr. Beaumont's view.

Dr. Bunting moved that one of the candidates for ordination should be admonished from the chair for highly improper conduct, of which he had been convicted at the District Meeting, but too leniently dealt with there. This was done in a solemn and suitable manner. The offender answered, " The admonition was worse than death, but he hoped it would not be lost upon him." A complaint was laid against a minister on account of his frequent absence from the Circuit.

Dr. Bunting : " I think that a Superintendent should not go out of his Circuit without consulting his colleagues ; but other Preachers not without the Superintendent's consent." Two ministers had left Shetland without leave on the strength of a medical recommendation to remove to a warmer climate.

Dr. Bunting: "I propose that letters be sent to them advising them to retire." (Agreed.)

These letters proved more medicinal than the medical prescription, and more bracing than the Shetland climate. They were not much worse for their trip to those interesting islets or their hyperborean boating and fish diet.

An inquiry came from New Zealand whether Roman Catholic converts to Methodism were to be rebaptised. Of course, it was decided in the negative. It was at first proposed to submit the question to a committee; but Dr. Beaumont said: "Don't send such a question to a committee; it will look as if the Conference were in a fog." A committee was appointed on an emergent matter, and the President wished the committee would now retire.

Dr. Bunting: "I object to men being ordered out of the Conference amid important questions." Nothing more was said.

The collection in the classes for the Auxiliary fund was found to be "£2,000 odd less than last year." J. Fowler proposed a collection, on the earliest Sunday practicable after Conference, in the Circuits which were deficient.

Dr. Bunting: "I second Mr. Fowler's motion. I would not have a smaller sum paid to the poor claimants. Their allowance must be certain. The Centenary money which would have gone to this purpose is given away; our people are pledged to us." It was suggested that the subject should be brought before the Leaders' Meetings.

Dr. Bunting: "You will ruin your pastoral power by giving up everything to Leaders' Meetings."

Dr. Bunting was obliged to intermit his attendance at the Conference for about a week; and he was sorely missed, even with such an accomplished administrator in the chair as John Scott, his second in command. Business drove heavily; like the wheels of Pharaoh's chariots, and with much creaking and with many a jolt. Yet there was quite enough of grim humour. A brother objected to his appointment on the ground that "the South of England was injurious to his health." He was at once informed that there was a most opportune opening in Shetland. Another brother came to the rescue by saying: "We must not make Shetland a penal settlement." A retiring official had made a request to the Managing Mixed Committee for a concession and indulgence which would have been not unreasonable in the circumstances if it could have been accorded without inflicting on his successor an equal inconvenience, as well as detriment to the

department itself. They had not felt at liberty to grant the hampering indulgence. So the brother was induced to appeal to Conference for that which the Committee did not think it right to grant. Mr. Fowler shrewdly reasoned that to reverse the decision of a committee, half composed of laymen, to meet the wishes of a member of our own Body would be occupying debatable and risky ground; inasmuch as it could not be claimed as a right, but was expressly craved as an indulgence and accommodation. As it would clearly involve a question of finance, as well as one of easy and efficient working, he did not see how the Conference could do more than suggest some mutually unexceptionable temporary arrangement.

The case was stoutly argued *pro* and *con*, and Mr. Fowler significantly notes: "The Conference seemed perplexed."

After a weary, weltering discussion, the President suggested that "it would be best to leave the matter with the Managing Committee, and that the Conference should not interfere; we shall thus avoid collision with a committee to whom we have confided all such details."

Some objection was made to the use of the term "Ordinance" instead of *Sacrament*. Dr. Beaumont: "I do not object to the word *Sacrament*, though it is a heathen term, but I will not be manacled and shut up to it." Mr. Atherton: "I would have the Scriptural words used, '*The Lord's Supper*'; keep to that."

The first answer to the question, "Any objections to any brother?" was "W. H. Rule has worn a gown." Mr. Rule had been present at, and taken part in, the discussion on the gown at the last Conference, when the wearing of the gown in England had been restricted to Sheffield school. He had done this despite the protestations of the people. His only defence was that "he had worn it abroad, and thought fit to wear it at home."

Thus three prominent ministers were acting in open defiance of the Conference—James Everett, Samuel Dunn, and William H. Rule, the two latter in contempt of the wishes of their people also, and the last-named in overt opposition to his Superintendent's judgment.

The gown had done so little to retrieve the Scottish difficulty that the Chairman who proposed it and carried it now felt himself obliged to recommend the withdrawal of several ministers and the sale of several chapels. The Chairman,

Dr. Beaumont, earnestly protested against this. He powerfully pleaded the rich contribution which Scotland had made to England in the bright succession of effective preachers it had supplied from the second President, Alexander Mather, to the powerful men then present; such mighties as Dr. McNicholl, the two McOwans and McLean, and the very man who now stood up to advocate the withdrawal of ministers and the sale of chapels—the energetic Peter Duncan. He also showed what an education Scotland had conferred on the many worthies who spent their early ministry in that inspiring, educated country—Robert Newton, William Atherton, George Cubitt, and the rest. His argument was persuasively sustained by men who had spent in Scotland some of their most fruitful years, such as Timothy C. Ingle and Alexander Bell.

So it was resolved that such world-renowned historic places as Ayr and Perth and Leith should, like a penitent probationer, “be tried another year.”

One of Dr. Beaumont's telling points was this: “We support a minister at Leyton, within walking distance of two of our most powerful London Circuits—the First London, with its seven ministers, its strong staff of departmental men, and its body of students, and the Third London, with its four ministers and great force of local Preachers with not half enough to do—and yet you can't afford to keep a Preacher in towns remote from help.”

Dr. Bunting reappeared in Conference in the midst of an animated conversation. The venerable Richard Reece, now entering on the fifty-seventh year of his itinerancy, after being for three years the Superintendent at City Road, was now appointed to *Margate*.

On the reading out of this, Mr. W. M. Bunting said: “I think there is a want of due respect in this Body towards the fathers of the Body. This is the first deviation from that respect which has ever been manifested by the Conference. I oppose this deviation because I am a junior. If we take this course, there will be no security for the juniors who may be spared to become seniors.”

Mr. Reece: “I am willing to go to Margate; or to become a Supernumerary, if the Conference so think fit. I am quite prepared to do what I have for fifty-five years been doing and advising other men to do—acquiesce in the judgment of my brethren. I have still extraordinary strength. But I could not be happy to displace any other man.”

Dr. Beaumont: “I concur with Mr. William Bunting. A royal oak should not be supplanted by a sapling.”

Mr. Dixon: “If we let Mr. Reece go from City Road to Margate, will it not appear that he is lowered in his last days? I recollect with delight his counsels and his ministrations at the last Conference. We owe it to ourselves to do honour to such a man as Richard Reece.”

Dr. Bunting: “I have only been here a few minutes. Mr. Reece is worthy of all honour. But the flock of Christ is in question. There is no fear o

creating a precedent in this case. Place his name without affixing the word *Supernumerary*. If he will accept it, let him have a pecuniary provision."

The venerable veteran exclaimed indignantly: "Not a penny!"

Dr. Beaumont: "Mr. Reece will not so dishonour himself."

Mr. Vevers remarked on the love in which Mr. Reece was held in his old Circuits, Hull and elsewhere.

The next contested case of stationing formed so strong a contrast to the foregoing as to call forth the exclamation: "Look on *this* picture, and on *that*." The case occupied a considerable time, as, indeed, it had done steadily for a succession of removals, through a considerable stretch of years. It, too, was that of a senior. He was entering on his forty-seventh year of ministry. But once more the Stationing Committee had failed to meet his wishes and, as he thought, his *claims*.

At last Dr. Bunting rose and said: "I disclaim all cant. I think that Mr. —'s age entitles him to what is called a good Circuit. I think he would do well in Bristol."

The sturdy claimant said: "I cannot submit to this."

Another Circuit was named where he might be Superintendent, and there was a torrent of *Noes* and *Yeses*. It was ruled that the *Yeses* had it.

So the persistently importunate self-advocate had conquered an appointment as much superior to the one that he was leaving as Mr. Reece's Margate was below his City Road. Small wonder that William Bunting should observe: "I think that Mr. Reece has been unkindly treated."

Dr. Bunting, on the report of the Committee of Privileges, said: "We should have a working sub-committee. If the few had not done most of the work, the many would have done nothing." This was agreed to, and "the designation of the acting committee was left to Dr. Bunting."

This year Mr. Fowler succeeded in securing a session for a conversation on the state of the societies.

Dr. Bunting: "I very much doubt whether the practice of holding prayer-meetings after service instead of society meetings is not a great calamity. In Cornwall there are great revivals, but in the regular work there is little done." Manchester District reported a decrease of 295.

Mr. Taylor: "There was no instance of a Methodist being concerned in the late riots. Some have been compelled by the *others* to leave their work. But many complain that they are not attended to as they used to be."

The riots here alluded to were the riots instigated by Feargus O'Connor, the protevangelist of Chartism, which paralysed

industry and proclaimed a civil war between employers and employed. In many of the great Lancashire manufacturing towns the military had to be called out. One of the favourite watchwords was "More pigs and fewer parsons," including in the last term all ministers of religion whatever.

Mr. Caughey, the American, was inquired after.

Mr. A. E. Farrar: "On his appearing in Liverpool, I could not do otherwise than invite him to preach. He has been instrumental of great good."

Dr. Beaumont: "I do not think Mr. Caughey a tourist or an experimenter, but a man of God. I think Mr. Atherton's remarks are characterised by levity. I told the people I could not give up my pulpit to Mr. C. He assisted me in the prayer-meeting after the service. I thank God for what followed."

Mr. Osborn: "I am told that he wished to preach twice every Sunday, and to have exclusive possession of the pulpit for the rest of the week; and that he required this, and had so occupied Brunswick Chapel for some time. His mode of procedure seems mechanical; and, if so, justifies Mr. Atherton's expression. He supersedes the regular ministers."

Dr. Beaumont: "I have given up my pulpit once, but gave way only once. In pressing him on me the people showed sound judgment and good taste. Bless God that I gave up my pulpit. I never felt more unction than under his sermon."

Dr. Bunting: "I wish to know if what Mr. Osborn has said is correct."

Mr. A. E. Farrar: "All that Mr. Caughey has done has been justified by the results. Mr. Caughey's conduct was calculated to rouse me and others."

Mr. Atherton: "I have given 220 more tickets in June than in March, but many had been under serious impressions previously. Ladies have collected £70 for Mr. Caughey when I could not keep up our funds."

Mr. Waugh: "I have heard more disagreeable noise in this Conference than in Mr. Caughey's meetings."

Mr. A. E. Farrar: "In my Circuit the funds have been considerably increased."

Dr. Bunting: "What does Mr. Farrar mean by following Mr. Caughey's example? Are we all to go to America for a year or two to straighten up?"

Dr. Bunting: "I do not know how the Americans can give these dispensations. One of the worst kinds of Popery is this Methodist Popery."

To one who has studied Mr. Caughey, it is not hard to understand this difference of judgment with regard to him. There were two sides to his character and work. That he had a grace-gift rich and rare is not to be denied—the *gift of bringing the undecided* to decision. This was indicated by his favourite text: "How long halt ye between two opinions? if the Lord be God, follow Him," etc. The fact that many of his converts were under good impressions already was in evidence of the genuineness and

greatness of his gift. There are hundreds in our congregations who just want bringing to the point ; who are, as the old phrase was, " living at uncertainties in respect to their eternal interests." There are hundreds more who want rousing, who come to chapel for a treat rather than a testimony. Caughey aroused and enchained attention by his interrogatory and appellant tone of voice, and the air of a man who was pleading in a case of life and death. At times the forensic would intensify into the dramatic. In prayer and in sermon alike he seemed to be in a white heat of spiritual solicitude. Undoubtedly he was the means of converting hundreds. But there was another side to Mr. Caughey, that which was very mildly indicated by Mr. Osborn's word " mechanical." That which Mr. McLean repudiated as the " machinery of a revival " Mr. Caughey carried to a great excess. The " sympathy " of which Mr. Atherton spoke slightly is quite legitimate, " if a man use it lawfully " ; but Mr. Caughey did not scruple to resort to deliberate and systematic deception in order to produce it. So far as I know, he was the first to introduce the unworthy trickery of decoy penitents. Certainly, not one of our great English revivalists had stooped to such manœuvres. He would call together a number of people from surrounding Circuits, who had been converted for a length of time, and obtain a promise that so soon as they heard his invitation to penitents they would crowd up to the communion rail in order to allure others to the same place. And this was only one of the illusions which he was wont to practise. Moreover, the peril of a partisanship tending strongly to division was very great, and in Hull, at least, was only staved off by the judiciousness and pastoral influence of the two Superintendents, and by the unswerving loyalty of the leading lay-revivalists in both the Circuits.

There was, however, strong cause for encouragement. Both ministers and people had laid to heart the decrease of the preceding year, and by " doing the first works " had stirred up " the first love," and the Pastoral address, written by Mr. Barrett, had proved most timely and effective. An increase was reported in Great Britain of 4,297. No practical resolution was adopted with regard to Mr. Caughey. Mr. Fowler took the opportunity of addressing the Conference, but, unhappily, he does not report his own deliverances.

Mr. Dixon : " I will not notice the *Watchman*. I have been in manufacturing Districts. The state of things is not satisfactory to me. The



Established Church has become vastly more active, zealous, pastoral. I do not complain of this; I have a right to complain of Dr. Hook, and proselytism. We must emulate the zeal of the Established Church. We must think only of promoting the work of God. I wish we had not the word revivalist, but *no* uniformity can be in the order of God. Great variety is His order. We occupy a most important position in the country; let us maintain and work our own distinctive system. But we must not let ourselves down to the level of political Dissent. I believe that God has raised up the Methodist body to conserve purity of doctrine and experimental piety in these times of unbelief and Popery. We have a glorious platform of doctrine and experience. Let us keep upon it, and then the past history of Methodism will reprove despondency."

Mr. Marsden: "What we want is more frequent society meetings and such preaching as that of Mr. Benson."

Dr. Bunting: "Mr. Fowler has stated six diseases, assigned eight causes and six remedies. I do not agree with him as to the reason of the declining attendance of poor people at our services. More chapels are of great importance; but the main cause of their estrangement from us is Radicalism, infidelity, and Socialism. Methodism must not lose its character for loyalty. We have not meddled with politics in London, as some have done in the North. We must be left to ourselves about voting. I disapprove of the alteration in the Sheffield school. It is not a feather in Mr. Keeling's cap. The *Watchman* should not be spoken of slightly. It helped us in the Warrenite troubles. Its mistakes are incidental. They may embarrass us sometimes. You are not content to live in houses; you must have mansions. You cannot walk; you must ride. This abridges your means of usefulness. There must not, then, be this nibbling at our collections. Do not give way to the common pretence: 'We never see your face but when you come for money.' We must remember that the pulpit is the principal throne of dominion."

Dr. Bunting closed rather precipitately, as it was the hour for adjourning.

The six diseases of Mr. Fowler's diagnosis were: (1) Oppressive chapel debts, which consume so much care and thought and money that would have been available for aggressive enterprise. (2) The building of enormous chapels in too close proximity to each other, instead of multiplying moderately sized sanctuaries at due distances from each other, as centres of spiritual life and influence within reach of masses of population now comparatively neglected. (3) The consequent lessening of the number of ministers upon the ground, since one man is made to do instead of two. (4) The burdening of an insufficient staff of ministers with pastoral obligations which they can in no wise overtake. (5) The consequent decline of pastoral visitation; men not doing as much as they could because they are exhausted by the exertions of the Sunday and disheartened by excessive demands upon their time and strength. (6) The passion for what he called

"popularising"—*i.e.* the measuring one's Connexional importance by the frequency of his absence from his own Circuit, from which results overburdening of his colleagues, neglect of leaders' meeting, and a general remissness in administration.

Of course, the remedies were obvious when the six diseases were detected: (1) Kill your chapel debts before they kill you, and build no more chapels with unmanageable debts upon them. (2) Build *more* chapels rather than monster chapels. (3) That will necessitate the having a stronger force of ministers upon the ground, who may be so much better able to cope with the demands and duties of pastoral oversight and sympathy. (4) The consequent increase of systematic pastoral oversight, which is absolutely necessary even to the holding of our own against the aroused activity and the immense numerical superiority of the clergy. (5) and (6) Close and continuous attention to all departments of our Circuit work, even at the cost of Connexional notability.

Mr. Fowler's admonition was not "like water spilt upon the ground." The Conference set itself at once to appoint committees to investigate all cases of exorbitant expense in chapel building, one of these consisting of Joseph Fowler, Robert Wood, and William Barton.

It was also proposed that discipline be administered to all Superintendents who allow chapels to be built in violation of the terms on which permission to build was given.

Dr. Bunting: "Let it be known that a big chapel builder is suspected of not being a good pastor. He is like a great *Church disbuilder*."

On the reading of the address to the Irish Conference, Mr. Waugh said: "I have seen Ireland deluged with blood, but not a hair of any Methodist preacher's head touched. We are not cowards; our country respects us. Ireland is in danger of being surrendered to Popery. But *we* have no wish for a repeal of the union, either with the British crown or the British Conference. But we do not spend much time about these things; we have enough to do in minding our own proper work. We need your sympathy and prayers; we are grateful for your support. You need not fear the issue. Protestant Ireland will be faithful to England. Yet many in the other Churches are unfriendly to us. We occupy a position of great importance."

The Pastoral Address by Mr. G. Osborn was a long but well-written document.

Mr. S. D. Waddy: "The only point on which there will be a difference of opinion is the reference to the Scotch disruption."

Dr. Bunting: "I could not vote for the Address unless that passage be omitted. We gain nothing by departing from moderation. Both sides of the House of Commons give us credit for moderation. I would avoid anything

like vituperation in the hour of victory. I once hoped that such a thing was possible as an Established Church without State interference. But now I see it to be impossible. I wish two thousand clergymen would leave the English Church in the same way. I don't like so much in the address about Puseyism; Oxford has suspended Pusey. Mr. Fowler might have found a ninth cause of declension in too much writing against Puseyism."

Mr. Dixon: "I hope the passage about the Scotch Church will be left out. I take the unpopular view of the question." Mr. W. M. Bunting: "I wish this conversation could be adjourned till to-morrow."

Dr. Bunting: "Had we not better adjourn this subject till to-morrow, and take up now our own Scotch question?" Mr. Dixon: "The committee recommend that Mr. McLean be stationed at Dundee."

Dr. Bunting: "If Mr. McLean be taken from Lambeth, he is under pledge to the Missionary Committee; but to remove him would greatly agitate Lambeth." The President: "The change proposed will not do for Lambeth, and it is too late to make it now." Mr. McLean: "I am quite willing to go back to my native country in its troubles, and I don't think Lambeth would lose anything by the change. And I have no wish to go back from anything I have said to the Missionary Committee. The Conference must send me where it thinks I may do most good."

This discussion has been most disorderly, and it was followed by a noisy talk on an unimportant matter.

An attempt was made on some pretext or other to evade the law of the itinerancy by some manœuvring in favour of two exceptional cases.

Dr. Bunting: "With great submission, I must say that is the duty of the President not to allow such a proposition to be made."

The President forthwith did his "duty."

Mr. E. Walker reopened the conversation on the Pastoral address by sharply objecting to the introduction into it of a pronouncement on the merits of a dispute in another Church, about which many of our ministers and people had been led to form a different judgment from that of the writer of the address. He thought it uncalled for and unwise, in our *Pastoral* address, to set our people thinking and talking about debatable and complex questions of Church politics, with what, as a Connexion, we had no more to do than had the other Churches in our own contests with Dr. Warren and with Mr. Stevens. "I venerate the leaders in the movement, but their position is both questionable and novel. It is not that of the Scotch Reformers. There never was a body of ministers who could persuade the State to supply emoluments and defray expenses, and yet have no voice in the disposal of the money."

Dr. Bunting: "Patronage is a curse to any Church. It gives the power to the democracy, not to the members of the Church and the presbytery. The many: 'If you object to a minister you must define your objection. The only question is you shall judge of his suitability.' If the man is known by the presbytery to be unsuitable, all is open to be judged by the civil courts."

This should be resisted unto death. The question has changed during the last three years. I doubt whether Mr. Jackson, in his pamphlet, has committed himself to the Establishment principle in all circumstances. I trust not. I know his sobriety; he has come out on the Puseyite question. Mr. Jackson's pamphlet has gone no farther than we did in our petition."

Dr. Beaumont: "I have no difficulty in sympathising with the seceders without admiring all that they have said and done. They have applied to their tailor—the State—to widen their coat, which they felt to be too straight; but the State refused to widen it; said that as big men as they had worn it heretofore, and there were plenty quite disposed to wear it as it is. They grew to a girth until they burst it, and walked forth from the tailors to make for themselves a better fit. In doing this they have adventurously taken strides where Wesley, with such grand results, was content to take but steps, and left us to follow with the like candour and the like courage and, if we continue faithful to our doctrine, our spirit, and our principles, yet nobler results. To me, personally, it seems that they would have done better to have gone out sooner than they did, and then they might have gone more quietly, as we have done. But, in the main, I am with them. They are now what we are—Nonconformists who do not quarrel with the Establishment principle, unless it comes in the way of the Church's work. I hope that they will keep to the spiritual principles of Chalmers and his coadjutors, and that we shall keep to the principles and the doctrines of John Wesley and his helpers; and then we shall march shoulder to shoulder, and triumph over sin and the devil and his angels."

Mr. Atherton: "Let me have freedom of speech. Whilst I admire their self-denial, I think the great mission of these noble Scotchmen was, and should be still, to witness against and counteract the fatal effects of moderatism in the land. A little while ago there were but a few evangelists in that country, now they are a host. I object to patronage, but on higher grounds than those on which the Free Church leaders have objected. Why do they now object to patronage? Patronage and State interference have been in the Kirk for centuries. There are two sides to this question—a State side as well as a Church side, and in such a question the State has its rights as well as the Church."

Mr. Dixon: "I much lament that this question has been mooted in the Pastoral address; our Connexion has no call to judge on the Scotch question. We are here to judge about our own duty. I am willing to go as far as the last Conference document. We must sympathise with good men who have made such sacrifices, and who preach repentance and justification by faith and regeneration. But I think their present movements are not in harmony with their past acts. I greatly doubt their wisdom. The Evangelicals, with their majority in the General Assembly, were in a stronger position than they are as a separate body. In their going out I see a most sublime spectacle; there has been nothing like it since St. Bartholomew's Day. But I wish us to be spared from any further endorsement of their action than we have already given. It is unwise for us to officially set our people discussing the nice points raised by this dispute. I fear lest our people should want to abolish the itinerancy by keeping a minister they take to without regard to the rights and interests of the rest of the Connexion. I almost tremble to differ in

judgment from my friend Dr. Bunting, but I have read that the Scotch law lords cannot coerce the presbytery into ordaining anyone whom they object to. This first principle of spiritual independence I approve of. Our Pastoral address makes a distinction between 'spiritual' and 'ecclesiastical' independence. Who is to decide what is spiritual and what is ecclesiastical? The honest Free Churchmen can maintain their present position, but they cannot reconcile it with their past and not pronounce a judgment on the question. This is all I wish; I hope nothing will be said to injure any soul. Do let us be cautious; these Scotchmen are very headstrong in public meetings; positions have been taken up by them in which we cannot agree. It is a great event, and I hope it may prove a great blessing; but if it turn into a democracy it will not prove a blessing."

Mr. J. W. Thomas: "Are we ready to abandon the Establishment principle? Is not the Church of England as much *under* the State as is the Kirk of Scotland. We have seen and heard much to shake our confidence in the English Establishment, but let us be cautious in our public utterances."

Dr. Beaumont: "I move the retention of the passage under discussion."

Dr. Bunting then rose and made admissions on the side of Mr. Atherton, Dr. Dixon, and Mr. Walker which one wonders did not awake himself and the Conference to a perception of the shakiness of the ground over which they were leading the Connexion. He finished by saying:

"I approve of the sentence, but if I had written it it would have been a little differently worded. We approve of their Christian principles, and if our friends think right to give them practical proof of this we shall applaud them."

Mr. W. M. Bunting made a long speech beginning thus: "I must tender my protest against any essential alteration in the Pastoral address."

His position did not substantially differ from his father's, and it carried its line over the same Chat Moss without sinking any concrete for the support of his train of argument.

The disputed paragraph was retained. It runs thus: "We do unhesitatingly declare our adherence to what we consider to be by far the most important principle involved in the recent discussions—the one great principle, namely, that it is the right of every church to claim, in matters which are plainly and in their very nature spiritual and ecclesiastical, and especially in relation to the sacred functions belonging to the admission, ordination, appointment, suspension, and deposition of ministers, an unfettered freedom of action," etc.

There are in this sentence some very notable points. (1) It goes far beyond the admiration of a truly heroic act on the part of certain Christian ministers; it lays down a broad Church principle. (2) The affirmation of this principle clearly involves the condemnation of every Protestant National Church. (3) It

condemns all lay presentations to Church livings, whether by private individuals or by State officials ; all "advowsons" in every form. It condemns, especially and emphatically, the appointment of bishops by the State, and all and every intermeddling with Church matters either by Parliament or the Government of the realm. (4) This was quite a new position for the Conference to take, and proves that within the last three years Dr. Bunting, and the majority of the Conference with him, had, like the Scotch Evangelists, made a great change of front, if not as to "the Establishment principle," yet—which is more to the practical point—as to the *actual* Established Churches in the land. It is also not unworthy of notice that this sentence was drawn up by Dr. Osborn, the stoutest defender of the Establishment in the Conference. That an error in the statement of the one great principle involved, though clearly pointed out by Dr. Dixon, was still left uncorrected—namely, that the question in dispute turned on the admission and ordination of ministers, whereas the pinch was with whom should rest the *local appointment* of men already both admitted and ordained, and who should finally determine what minister should go to *which* place.

Dr. Bunting expressed a wish to be left off some of the committees, saying : "I cannot go on ; I am conscious of failure." The Conference would not listen to this.

Dr. Bunting explained that Mr. Farmer's retirement from the treasurership of the Theological Institution was not caused by any abatement of interest, as was manifest from his having secured to it for ever the interest of £500.

The President wished the word *supernumerary* to be omitted after Mr. W. M. Bunting's name. The Conference agreed.

Mr. W. M. Bunting : "I wish my case to be deferred till the word is dropped altogether." This was not entertained.

Dr. Bunting : "We are always in a hurry at the close of the Conference, and are getting into the Scotch way of appointing committees to do part of our proper work."

The President : "If we were to sit half a year, we should be in a hurry at the close."

One of the most important matters decided by this Conference was that of education. During the year Sir James Graham's intolerable Bill had been withdrawn. It proceeded on the assumption that the clergy of the Established Church were the only body whom the State could recognise as entrusted with the religious education of the English people, and that all State-aided schools must be under their control and management. This was, of course, resisted by the whole body of Nonconformists in

the country and, for various reasons, by a considerable number of influential Churchmen. The Nonconformist Churches, in successfully resisting this offensive measure, had taken up a distinctly *denominational* position ; each of them had claimed *the right to take its fair, full part in the religious education of the people*. In the day of their triumph the two principal Nonconformist Churches—the Wesleyans and the Congregationalists—felt that they had thus committed themselves to do what they had claimed the right to do. They had also sense enough to see that if they abandoned to the clergy of the Establishment the whole field of denominational day schools, they would put themselves to a desperate disadvantage, and most fatuously further the encroachments and aggressions of the Established Church.

Hence, in 1843 *the Congregational Board of Education* was established, and the Wesleyan Methodist Conference and Connexion set itself most earnestly to work to make the day school an effective part of our compact Church organisation. Hence the conversation on the subject at this Conference.

Dr. Bunting : " We must array ourselves not only against Puseyism but also against covetousness, negligence, and worldliness in our own Church. The luxuriousness of Methodist Establishments among our people is on the increase, and among our Preachers also. How can our young men talk against covetousness when they stipulate about houses ? You preach in print that our people do enough. Let us make no farce about day school education ; we must have more money if it is to be done. In the estimation of public men Sunday schools are not national education. ' I am of that opinion. Why not admit this to ourselves ? It is well worth our while to push day schools. Let us establish day schools. Let us go to it at once. It may do our cause much good. Let us go body, soul, and spirit into it.' "

Mr. Marsden gave us an instance of the zeal of the clergy in this matter, a clergyman who had 750 day school children under his own eye and hand, in his parish day school.

There can be little doubt that this was his own energetic nephew.

Dr. Bunting moved that a large mixed committee be called as soon as practicable. The following resolution was adopted : " The Wesleyan Connexion is imperatively called upon not only to efficiently maintain its educational operations, but also greatly to enlarge them by the formation of weekday schools in every Circuit wherever it is practicable." The selection of the committee was left to the President.

The last thing done before the reading of the Journal was an endeavour to procure an amendment of the objectionable

sentences in the Pastoral address. A long, warm, and animated discussion was carried on ; many in the body of the Conference being in opposition to some upon the platform. Dr. Osborn ably defended his document.

Dr. Bunting : " I complain of the pertinacity with which Dr. Osborn wishes to press upon the Conference the adoption of his own views. The address is ably and beautifully written. But the Pastoral address is that of the *Conference to the Methodist Societies* ; not that of the minister appointed to write it. I move that it be committed to the President for revision." This was carried. Dr. Osborn : " I am sure that what I have written is true."

It is well worth while to notice this comparatively early instance of Dr. Osborn's " pertinacity." Neither Conference nor even Dr. Bunting were able to overcome it ; nor, as it would seem, the gentle and persuasive force of President John Scott. The objectionable sentence in the address is to be read in the *published Minutes of Conference* ; and although there is nothing in it which is literally untrue, yet it is calculated to give a wrong and therefore, as Dr. Dixon hinted, an injurious impression as to the extent of the dispute between the seceding Evangelicals and such a fair-minded statesman as Lord Aberdeen. In reading the discussion, one is struck by the fact that the two speakers who most nearly hit both the facts and the merits of the case were Dr. Bunting and Dr. Beaumont.

Thus closed the one hundredth Conference of the people called Methodists.

#### THE BIRMINGHAM CONFERENCE OF 1844.

The One Hundred and First Conference was held in Birmingham, under the Presidency of Dr. Bunting ; and a goodly sight it was to see, with the two foremost men in Methodism as President and Secretary : Jabez Bunting and Robert Newton.

Dr. Newton proposed thanks to the letter-writers.

The President : " I am glad to have been instrumental in transplanting Mr. Fowler to his proper place on the platform ; such a tall, strong cedar should stand on Lebanon."

The President's opening speech was touching in its simplicity :

" Honoured fathers and brethren, I enter on this office with strong emotion. First of all I do reverently and humbly acknowledge the goodness of God in my conversion and connection with Methodism and its ministry. What am I, and what my father's house, that thou hast brought me hitherto ? I never aspired to this honour ; never thought of it. If I had, I should have



declined it—not from utter incompetency but from comparative incompetency. But that would be to reflect upon your vote. If I could I would have made this statement before the election. But that is not our plan. I am afraid you will occasionally detect bewilderment of thought. I must request, almost demand, that you will correct my mistakes. Above all, pray for me."

This was the first Conference at which that most fitting symbol—John Wesley's field-Bible—was presented by the retiring President to his successor. John Scott was the first to hand it on; Jabez Bunting was the first to receive it.

The list of candidates for probation included such names as E. J. Robinson, J. D. Geden, W. M. Punshon, W. Hurst, B. Hellier, S. Coley, T. McCullagh, J. Walton, G. Mather, G. Alton, J. W. Greaves, J. Chapman. Of the candidates for ordination four were future Presidents, and of the candidates for probation three.

The President said of a candidate: "I have heard him preach. He prayed like a Methodist preacher. The man who can pray like one will soon preach like one."

Mr. W. M. Bunting objected to the phrase "Wesleyan Church."

Dr. Beaumont objected to the obituary statement that Josiah Hill was of an inoffensive temper.

The President: "I think Mr. Hill's later life was the holier and nobler. His associates were of the Liberal school. He got rid of Liberal views about doctrine, and had a second baptism of the Spirit."

A brother had resigned the ministry on account of ecclesiastical exactions; instancing the levying on each minister a contribution to the new chapel at Kingswood. He had asked leave to withdraw his resignation. Dr. Beaumont intimated that he had in the meantime been *experimentalising* elsewhere, but unsuccessfully. He was not allowed to recall his resignation. It was complained that circulars had been circulated through the Connexion applying for a shilling subscription to chapels in Portsmouth, Canterbury, and London, bearing the names of the ministers on the Circuits.

The President: "Mr. Wood should undertake to bring these cases before the Conference, by notice of motion, as to the best method of preventing these irregularities."

A popular brother was charged with having attended a political meeting on the day of an election. The feeling of the Conference was against this. An aged minister had not only attended a great political meeting and preached sermons but had written a very flaming political letter to a newspaper, signed *A Wesleyan Minister*. He would not express regret for his conduct, nor promise to abstain from such acts in future, but made a political speech.

The President: "It is my duty to tell you that you are acting wrongly. If you had written in your own name, it would not have involved us so much. We must request you to act more properly in future. If not, the time will come when you will not be allowed to say that you are a *Wesleyan minister*."

If you will act independently of us, we must leave you to your independence and take care of our own."

Mr. W. Griffith: "My political opinion is the same as that of Brother —. But after having heard the conversation and decision of the Conference I cannot act in opposition to the judgment of the Conference." These sentiments were cheered.

The President: "This does you credit."

A brother was charged with "maladministration of discipline in refusing to admit persons into the society who had not previously received a note on trial." He was acquitted by the District Meeting on the ground that it was unconstitutional to act otherwise. A counter-appeal was made to the Conference.

Dr. Beaumont took the view of the appellants. Hence arose the question, Whether a "note" of admission on trial was necessary in the case of a person who had practically been on trial for the greater part of a quarter?

The President: "We must not have our discretion fettered. Certainly, however, receiving on trial is a ministerial act. I think the manner in which the class was met was not quite right. It appears that Brother — has acted with some impropriety; but I see no reason for rehearing the case." The decision of the District Meeting was received.

A very juvenile Superintendent, who had been put in charge of a large Circuit very difficult to manage, with three world-famous towns within its borders, had signalised his earliest Superintendency by what he thought to be a master stroke of Methodist administration. He had thought it right to forbid the class meeting and the Supper of the Lord, and all other privileged Church meetings, to the principal member of his principal church. But a bright thought struck him, that he would give all senior Superintendents a *wrinkle*, by showing how quietly this might be done without the pestering paraphernalia of trial by a leaders' meeting, by a brilliantly simplifying change in terminology, by just calling that "*suspension*" which carried with it all the penalties and disabilities and the degradation and discredit of that which was known to the constitution as "*Expulsion*." For this suspension was not that of which the constitution knew anything—pending the earliest practicable trial. It was a dateless and indefinite exclusion from the privileges of membership, on the bare authority of its Superintendent and at his sole discretion. This was Superintendency *writ large*. The grey-haired office bearer who was thus summarily and protractedly shut out from Church membership had, it came out in Conference, been a Methodist for fifty years and a generous supporter of Methodism.

The aggrieved member, of course, applied to the chairman

of the District, who forthwith called a Minor District Meeting to investigate the charge of illegal deprivation of membership. Each of the parties chose two members of the District Meeting, who accordingly converged to the place appointed. But the brave young Superintendent rose to the occasion, and, after solemn devotional exercise, the chairman squared his portly person to conduct with dignity an important ecclesiastical investigation. But he was at once confronted by the Superintendent, "Grindrod" in hand, with a calm denial of the jurisdiction of the court. It had been summoned to consider a case of expulsion. "No such case had occurred; it was just a case of *suspension*" from membership during the discretion of the Superintendent. The experienced chairman and his four elderly co-assessors were nonplussed, and every man went to his own house.

But when the matter came before the Conference it took a much more serious aspect. The brief report of the Minor District Meeting being read,

Mr. Rigg inquired: "*Can* any Superintendent suspend a member before his crime be proved at a leaders' meeting?"

The Superintendent: "I thought it was only when the offence would be visited with expulsion that such trial was required."

The President: "How could you tell, without the verdict, what the sentence was to be?"

The Superintendent was interrogated by the President as to the mode in which he had come to the finding on which the sentence of his "*suspension*" rested. The Superintendent answered in a manner which created some distrustful feeling.

The President: "The District Meeting ought to have gone into the case as between the offending member and the minister. No doubt it was pleasanter to take the first coach and go comfortably home. If there were a rule which would prevent your doing what you were called together to do—namely, to decide a grievance between an aged member and a young minister—you might have been excused. The District Meeting did not consider the case from a truly ministerial point of view. You were there to administer substantial justice, and not to be baffled by what was, at the very best, a mere flaw in the indictment. It would be unworthy of this body to make a distinction between suspension and expulsion. Suspension for an indefinite period is, to all intents, expulsion. I think the District Meeting ought to have treated it as such. I think the Superintendent has been influenced by a desire of approbation and commendation."

A member of the Minor District Meeting defended its inaction vociferously, but did not make much impression.

Dr. Beaumont: "I think the Minor District Meeting ought at least to have advised the young Superintendent to allow the member a legal trial."

Mr. S. D. Waddy: "I cannot understand why the Superintendent did

not prevent the calling of the District Meeting, if that were the ground he meant to take."

The chairman of the District: "I felt that five elderly ministers being called together to settle a dispute between a minister and a member who thought himself illegally dealt with, we ought to have done something; but I was overruled."

Dr. Newton and three other ministers were requested to converse with the irregular Superintendent and ascertain what reasons or what circumstances had induced him to treat the case in an unauthorised and unconstitutional way. On returning, they acquitted the young Superintendent of any harsh or hostile feeling towards the aged member and office bearer, but recommended that the latter should be restored to membership.

Dr. Newton: "I wish the whole matter had been brought out in the regular way. Something had occurred on which a bad construction might be put, but with no real wrong in it whatever. I believe the matter has been sadly mismanaged."

Of course, the brother had to leave the troubled Circuit; and he was allowed some years longer to study Wesleyan Methodist law before he was again entrusted with its administration.

Dr. Osborn: "Has not some Preacher addressed the Stockport Sunday school?"

The President: "Mr. Benson was prevented from preaching at that school. The brother should be informed that he had done wrong, but there should be no public demonstration about it."

Mr. Bowers: "Rumours have been circulated that one of our Preachers is about to preach in it."

Dr. Beaumont: "Is there any law that we should not preach for this school?"

The President: "No. That would be offensive; but the Conference cannot give it any countenance."

Dr. Beaumont: "I will tell the truth of the case; I thought we were too sectarian: not going with those with whom we do not altogether agree, I have accepted an invitation; not being informed that I have done wrong, I should bow to the Chair."

Mr. Marsden: "It will be a blow to Methodism."

Dr. Beaumont: "Then I will decline the invitation. No brother has a right to disturb his own people in order to please other people."

The President: "I think we are a little too sectarian. With an indomitable, uncompromising regard to Methodism, we might fraternise a little more with other evangelical denominations. But our objection to the Stockport school is that it is not sectarian enough."

It was stated that a remarkable migration was taking place of Nonconformist ministers into the Established Church. The Bishop of Chester alone had received nineteen applications for Episcopal ordination. Two of these cases came before the

Conference. Two young ministers, both of them "Institution men," had obtained livings, and resigned their connection with the Conference, *after* their negotiations with the bishop were complete. One of them had been very popular and had been much praised and patronised, and had been profuse in his professions of devotion to Methodism. This intriguing with another Church, as Dr. Newton justly termed such negotiations, whilst professing attachment to our own was honestly denounced by Conference.

Dr. Beaumont: "I think we are to blame in petting men as this young brother was. It makes them think themselves too good for Methodism."

Mr. J. Fowler spoke earnestly on the question, but, as usual, does not report his own deliverance. All I can gather, with the help of recollection, is that he took occasion to insist upon the paramount necessity of so prepossessing the young students at our Institution with Wesleyan Methodist doctrine, and ideas and sentiments, and aims and holy ambitions, that they would have no heart to look elsewhere.

Mr. Bowers: "I think that Mr. Fowler has wandered from the question; I will return to it." He then reprobated the conduct of these men as most disingenuous, adding: "They learnt no indifference to Methodist doctrine and ordinances at the Institution."

Dr. Hannah: "In the main I agree with Mr. Bowers."

Mr. Vevers: "I am glad to hear Mr. Bowers speak as he does. This making the Methodist ministry a stepping-stone to something else is very mean."

Dr. Beaumont: "The points which Mr. Fowler raised should be the subject of consideration at some later session. They require much further consideration."

The President: "I have no objection to our recording on the Journal our sense of the dishonourable conduct of these men."

Mr. H. Davis moved and Mr. W. M. Bunting seconded a resolution to that effect.

Mr. W. M. Bunting: "Though I do not agree with Dr. Beaumont's low appraisement of the ability of one of them, yet I would set an emphatic brand upon him for his dishonourable conduct, and send him with it to whatever Church he has been bargaining with."

Mr. Thomas Powell said he "believed in baptismal regeneration, and that Mr. Wesley did too."

The President: "Mr. Powell must attach some peculiar meaning to the word regeneration. Mr. Wesley in his *Sermons* on the subject did not mean that any change took place in infant baptism which could supersede the necessity of the regeneration which attends justification by faith. That would be against the tenor of his teaching. Wesley's *Standard Sermons* and *Notes* do not teach baptismal regeneration. Whatever grace may be

bestowed in infant baptism, it is not regeneration. If Mr. Powell has written a pamphlet, I advise him not to publish it."

Mr. W. M. Bunting: "I could not remain a member of this Body if I did not abjure the doctrine of baptismal regeneration. I think that Mr. Powell should not be allowed to propagate these notions." It was determined that Mr. Powell should converse with Mr. Jackson and some others, on the subject.

Thus the memorable discussion on this subject at the Leeds Conference of 1882 had a prelusive anticipation at the Birmingham Conference of 1844.

A complaint was lodged by a clergyman against a very sedate and sober-minded brother for his having stood sponsor at a private baptism for a child who had been previously christened by a clergyman.

The President thought this highly improper; yet we must speak respectfully of sponsors, however much we may personally disapprove of the usage.

Dr. Newton approved of it, if the sponsors were godly persons. A copy of the rule on the subject was sent to the brother.

The most solemn and impressive and edifying sessions of the Conference were those which were devoted to the question, Who have died this year? and the theological examination of the candidates for ordination. The two seemed vitally related; the testimony to the noble Christian soldiership of those who had fallen on the field, and the good confession witnessed before many witnesses by the young soldiers who now pledged themselves to war a good warfare. The giving out of the hymn by Dr. Bunting: "I the good fight have fought, oh, when shall I declare?" and its singing by so many manly voices, tremulous with sensibility, had the combined effect of burial-hymn and battle-song, in a brief pause in some stern, glorious field-day, to give the rites of sepulture to the heroic dead. And then the massive tones and measured cadences of Dr. Dixon's tender yet uplifting supplication produced a most salutary, strengthening impression on a young Preacher's heart.

Mr. Fowler truly notes as to the theological examination:

"The questions were put with solemnity and emphasis, and a distinct answer was required from each candidate to each question."

The President on asking: "Will you not preach too loud or too long?" added, "Will you preach long enough and loud enough, but in moderation, and in due regard to other services?" "Don't have three heads and a tail; but be sure you take time to make appeals to the conscience."

The theological examination was conducted chiefly by the President and Dr. Hannah, but several distinguished brethren took an earnest part in it. It was the very reverse of perfunctory or superficial. As the *first* Conference, like wise master-builders, laid a firm, clear, massive concrete of Christian doctrine for the living temple they began to build; so now the utmost care was taken that the goodly structure of a hundred years' so solid and symmetric growth should not be *thrown off the perpendicular* in an unsightly and unsafe subsidence of that strong substructure which had proved to be a phenomenon of solidity, stability, and symmetry, and of steady, wide expansion. The gravity and heartiness of the theological examination, and the keen interest taken in it as one main object of that noble gathering, had a fine and a permanent effect upon those fifty-seven candidates for ordination. It was like an inspection of enthusiastic young cadets by the never-beaten officers of the stout Old Guard. The President put the candidates at their ease by deprecating our turning the tables on himself by "proving him with hard questions." He gave an instance of this having been tried on Wesley himself by an irrepressible young brother.

The President: "It was an open Conference, and young Samuel Bradburn tried to puzzle Mr. Wesley by asking him: 'Can a man fall from sanctification without losing his justification!' Mr. Wesley took up the hymnbook and gave out:

" 'Oh! may the least omission pain  
My well-instructed soul,  
And drive me to the blood again  
That makes the wounded whole.' "

The greater part of the time was taken up with the theology of experience: the great verities of our natural depravity, repentance, justification, adoption, the witness of the Spirit, entire sanctification, and the mutual relation of all these, both as revealed truths and as experienced facts.

Mr. W. M. Bunting made some very pertinent remarks: "A man cannot know his own justification and adoption but by the witness of the Spirit. He knows his own regeneration by the witness of his own spirit, his own consciousness of the movements of the Spirit on his affections and his dispositions."

A candidate referred to Tillotson's sentiment with regard to eternal punishment

The President: "Tillotson is no authority here." The candidate was required to state his *own* view on the doctrine, that the Conference might judge of its accordance with our standards and the Scriptures. A very explicit statement was also required as to the Divine obligation of the Christian Sabbath. Each candidate was required to pledge himself not to continue in our ministry if he should change his doctrinal tenets and convictions, so as to cease to believe and preach the doctrines to which he had given in his allegiance.

Dr. Hannah urged the young brethren to a sedulous and indefatigable study of the Scriptures, as the one effective safeguard against the want of freshness and reality in preaching.

Dr. Beaumont advised us not to be afraid or ashamed of the Methodist phraseology in preaching. He should be sorry to miss any of the endeared and hallowed terms, or to hear them less frequently. "I like the evangelical vocabulary."

The President: "I agree with Dr. Beaumont." He said: "We must beware of diluting the truth by a feebler phraseology. The only way to 'guard the Gospel' is to preach the whole Gospel, promises and threatenings alike." He again quoted Rowland Hill's retort to the minister who would "guard the Gospel"—"Guard a fool's head of your own."

Mr. Marsden moved and Mr. T. Jackson seconded "the reception of the fifty-seven candidates into full Connexion." Both expressed most heartily their deep satisfaction with what they had seen and heard of the young men.

The President took the sense of the Conference on the question by asking the whole body of ministers to *stand up*. He then addressed the young men most solemnly and pertinently. "I hope and believe that you will be faithful to the doctrines you have professed and the pledges you have given—faithful to Methodism. I do not feel unkindly towards nor think disparagingly of any other evangelical Church, but I believe that there is none which holds such an advantageous position in the country. And there is the same spiritual and moral and social necessity for the same doctrines, and the same way of preaching them, and the same means of edification at the hundred and first Conference that there was at the very first Conference. The self-same truths are as necessary now as they were then; and are the best calculated to correct the errors and to save the people from the sins of our own times." We Wesleyans have suffered much in our *forbearance*; never so much as now, from the Established Church. We owe it too much for the training of Mr. Wesley, and to our own consistency, to join, as a body of ministers, in an attack upon it because it *is* the Established Church. But the time has come when young Wesleyan ministers should be put upon their guard in this direction. When I was young I had the opportunity of entering the ministry of the Established Church. But I could not conscientiously subscribe all its Articles, nor even read all its offices; and on the other side (with the permission of my friend, Mr. Fowler, and the Dissenters) I think the *Rules of a Helper*, which are henceforth to regulate your conduct, are twelve axioms against independency. We have found the good of both systems; the *oversight* of a true, primitive episcopacy, and the freedom from State interference of a sober independency. I don't think that *conscientiousness* will dissolve our Connexion."



The effect of these most timely and affectionate advices upon the candidates was also most salutary. It made us regard our admission into the full ministry and enrolment in the grand brotherhood of Methodist pastors in the strong and solemn light in which they themselves regarded it ; not as the taking up of a profession, but the receiving of a mission and a commission.

A representative said : " I only represent the wishes of the Circuit."

The President : " I would not be the representative of a foolish wish. Your being a representative does not oblige you to wear a fool's cap. Give your own independent judgment."

Mr. Beecham maintained the "impossibility" of sparing Dr. Cook from Lausanne to be Chairman of the Guernsey District.

The President : " I think those islands are of more importance."

Another instance of Dr. Bunting's regard for the interests of the home work as much as of the Foreign Missions.

Great thankfulness and encouragement came with the report of an increase during the year of 6,574 in Great Britain.

The President : " I would not break up the itinerancy even to break up new ground. I have a strong objection to clandestine arrangements amongst the Preachers of a Circuit for a division of the places amongst them. I feel quite sure that the Islington Circuit, where I have the happiness to live, is injured by the ministers living so far apart. It is better for consultation that they should live nearer to each other. We are getting idle."

Mr. Reece felt great force in this view. Mr. Taylor took the opposite view.

A most estimable minister had become entangled in a business partnership by lending money to a relative, and was thus involved in questionable complications. The case was trying and perplexing, and occupied the Conference a good time. It had come before a Court of Justice to determine the extent of his liability.

The President questioned the propriety of appointing the invaluable brother to a Circuit, as the case was still undecided and there might be much distracting litigation. Mr. Scott thought not, until there was evidence of a dissolution of partnership.

Dr. Beaumont : " The secularity which has begun to spring up amongst us is a bad omen, especially the disregard of the sanctity of the Christian Sabbath. Legislation has done much to promote this. This is no matter of party politics, for unhappily in this matter both parties are alike."

Mr. Osborn : " Can nothing be done to recover the Wesley papers left unpublished by Mr. Moore? Could not the Court of Chancery interfere? "

This question was not answered, but it turned the President's attention to some hitherto unnoticed points in Mr. Moore's obituary.

The President: "It will hardly do to say 'he is happy now with his brethren,' since neither one nor all could ever persuade him either to burn or publish Mr. Wesley's papers according to the express terms of his literary trusteeship. And the word tenacious, as applied to his memory, is not accurate, unless tenacious is used in the sense of obstinate."

The President strongly objected to Mr. Reece's request to be allowed an assistant for a second year. The Conference decidedly approved of it, but Mr. Reece, unwilling to put the President and the Conference into opposition, announced that he would take upon himself the entire expense.

A Methodist battle of Dunbar took place, through the recommendation of the District Meeting to give up the Preacher in that historic town and to sell the chapel, but Dr. Beaumont played the Cromwell in the fight and turned it into a "crowning mercy."

He said: "I object to the destroying of a Circuit formed by Wesley himself, and to the sale of its chapel without debt, which was built by Wesley, so long as we have a living Church in the place. The Circuit is the product of two generations of laborious Methodist Preachers. I should be sorry to leave not a sign of Methodism in Edinburgh and Berwick, no memorial of once glorious times. Why all this lavish sympathy for another Church in Scotland if our own children are to be left to perish with hunger? I do protest, from the middle of my heart all round to the walls of it, against the surrender of Dunbar for the want of £25. Of the whole sum at your disposal for the relief of struggling Circuits you barely give one-twentieth to Scotland."

Mr. McLean: "From 1817 to 1824, when you appointed to Dunbar such men as Duncan McAllum, David McAllum, and Joseph Beaumont, and even in 1825, when poor John McLean was there, our chapel in Dunbar was crowded."

The President interposed: "I would have Mr. McLean direct his attention to the present state of Dunbar."

Mr. McLean: "Well then, don't leave the Methodist brose on the board to be lapped up by some neighbour's dog. Let us give as much money to the Free Church as we can spare from our own people—but don't let us hand *them* over too."

Ex-President Scott: "All that is wanted is £25 and a suitable man. We have trifled with our work in Scotland. It was found at the District Meeting that, although the Circuit stands on the Minutes as Dunbar and Haddington, yet the Preachers had only visited Haddington once during the year 1842-3."

Dr. Newton: "Men have gone to Scotland of late years as if it were a penal settlement, yet Methodism never was so much respected there as it is now. I will gladly go to Scotland if you will let me."

Mr. Haswell: "Our fault in Scotland has been the not looking after and cultivating the rural population, and the not carrying out the true Methodism of oversight, experience, and discipline. Look to this, and there will be no need to withdraw ministers or weaken Methodism in Scotland."

Mr. Alexander Bell pleaded hard for the continuance of the minister at Dunbar.

This time, at any rate, the Conference took to the case kindly and in good earnest. From amongst the young men to be ordained they singled out a braw young Scotchman, fervid, practical, shrewd, enterprising, gallant, who had taken a course of the London Methodism of sixty years ago. So Alexander Macaulay for the space of three years devoted his redundant energies to the raising of the decayed Dunbar Circuit, founded by the Founder himself in the year of grace 1766, but now a gaunt, storm-swept relic, like its own old castle-keep upon the battered coast. And Alexander's successors did not dissipate his little empire. To him succeeded the studious and sensitive William Mearns, and after him came Benjamin Frankland, B.A., commanding public respect and winning private confidence by his solid education, his conscientious assiduity, and his humbleness and gentleness.

There were serious difficulties in the stations. The stiffest was the appointment of Mr. Duncan to Glasgow. The minister who was then leaving Glasgow stated that Mr. Duncan would introduce gown and bands and tokens.

Dr. Beaumont: "I believe that the introduction of gown and bands has done anything but good to Methodism."

The President: "There should be no dispute about these things. To thrust them on an unwilling people is the Puseyism of Methodism. We might wear a gown if our people generally wished it, but not otherwise."

The President: "I wish to be relieved from the duties of Chairman of the London District."

Mr. Scott: "I think that we shall never be as we ought till the President is relieved from all other work, and be episcopal in the thing though not in the name."

The President: "I wish a note to be appended in the Minutes that the President has requested to be relieved from the office of Chairman."

The President: "Now that things are amicably settled, both amongst the Preachers and the Stewards, it is desirable that a kind letter should be sent to the disturbed Circuit, not a business letter, but an apostolic letter; and that Mr. Fowler should write a careful and amplified letter to the friends in one of his old Circuits, who had made the unreasonable demand to have in their Circuit, at the same time, three such powerful and popular men as F. A. West, G. B. Macdonald, and F. J. Jobson. Tell them that we have taken it with the kindest consideration, but that we regard the power of appointment not as a prerogative but as a trust, and that we have exercised it to the best of our judgment."

A Superintendent of long standing was sentenced to be admonished from the Chair. The censure was most solemn and affecting.

A complicated case took up a very unusual portion of the time of Conference. A very able but extremely sensitive brother had made a personal grievance the subject of a discourse at a society meeting. This misuse of a purely spiritual service for troubling the Church with a purely personal affair had greatly displeased some of the best and oldest members. Being remonstrated with by the Superintendent at the ministers' meeting, he had applied to the Chairman of the District for a consideration of the case. The matter had accordingly been submitted to adjudication, and five distinguished ministers in one of the strongholds of Methodism had been thrown into collision, a prosperous society divided into parties, and one of the finest laymen in the Connexion had resigned his office, as he and the Quarterly Meeting had been held up in a very unfavourable light to the society and the ministers of the District. The District Meeting recorded its regret that the matter had been introduced into either the society meeting or the District Meeting, and thus caused a contention that might have been easily avoided. Against this decision the offended minister appealed.

The President: "It is right that any complainant minister should have the opportunity of relieving his mind to his brethren in the District Meeting. But in this case conflicting statements have been made and brethren seemed to impeach each other. If the matter could terminate here it would be better. But conflicting statements to the Conference were thought to render a committee inevitable."

Mr. W. M. Bunting wished to be placed on the committee, but as he was a connection of one of the parties the President ruled: "That would be decidedly improper!" The President himself named a very strong committee. The committee blamed "the making a personal matter" the subject of an address to the society meeting, though he had been irritated by anonymous attack. "Early and judicious interference on the part of the Superintendent and the Chairman would have prevented further mischief."

Mr. Scott: "The Superintendent has charge of Methodism in his Circuit."

The President: "And the Chairman has charge of the Methodism of the District, and should have dealt with the Superintendent for not dealing with his indiscreet colleague. Is it the wish of the Conference that everyone who has a complaint should have a hearing?"

Mr. Scott: "The Superintendent delayed his interference with his colleague."

Moved: "That the Superintendent should have taken more prompt and decisive action." (Carried.)

The President: "Mr. — should not have brought a personal matter before a society meeting, especially without consultation with his colleagues. I hope this will do him good. A Methodist Preacher must act in conjunction with his colleagues."

There ensued an unfortunate discussion on the question whether the over-sensitive brother should be reappointed to or removed from his present Circuit. In this nearly all the Preachers implicated took part. It seems to me that the feeling of the Conference was with the Superintendent; and the Chairman explains how recriminations, etc. etc., took place, at some length. The Secretary took the advantage of a lull to read on.

The President proposed that a deputation should be appointed to wait on the aggrieved Circuit Steward and remove from his mind any unpleasant feeling in reference to the affair.

Thomas Powell, having conversed with some of the senior brethren, agrees: "That he will not talk with our people on the controverted points, and will not publish anything on the subject, as it may do harm and cannot do good."

The President: "If the time of my departure were at hand, and I were requested to say what is best to be done, I would say, *Strengthen your executive*. Whether we feel the want of it or not, our people do."

Dr. Dixon: "I am glad that the Conference is in a temper to make some progress in the right direction. You make the Chairmen responsible for the care of Districts without giving them power to execute. We must have an executive power corresponding with our position. I wish the term Chairman was dropped."

The President: "I dislike the term Chairman; it is not ecclesiastical. But there are difficulties in the way of changing it."

It was at length decided that a Chairman shall, if he thinks it necessary, have power to visit a Circuit, having first consulted the Superintendent. The wording of the rule was "left to be considered"; by *whom* was not expressed, but understood.

A generally well-conducted, worthy brother expressed himself so impertinently that he was reproved by the President. He replied: "I have travelled twenty years, and have not spoken before in Conference, and I think it hard to be treated in this way." He was again called to order, and told that he was speaking improperly.

A letter was read from York thanking the Conference for withdrawing a fifth (tentative) minister from the Circuit, and intimating that an increase of ministers does not always secure more Pastoral attention.

The President: "I would have the Auxiliary Fund money put down at the September quarter."

This was carried with but one dissentient (J. Fowler) but many neutrals.

Mr. Fowler thought Christmas quarter the most likely to be productive. A committee of inquiry into the mode of administering the Auxiliary Fund was appointed.

Dr. Hannah called attention to the handing over of the Navigators Islands to the London Missionary Society, against the earnest and pathetic wishes of the natives themselves.

Dr. Beecham: "An agreement has been entered into with the London Missionary Society which cannot now be violated."

The President: "This has been very fully considered by both parties. We appealed to the Dissenting principle that the wish of the people themselves should determine the question as to whether of two Churches they should belong to, and they ought not to be given up to another Church

against their own wish ; but political feeling had much to do with it. One-sided views have prevailed."

Dr. Beaumont expressed his deep regret that the arrangement had been made, but there the conversation dropped.

No one who has read Miss Farmer's book, giving the heartrending details of the working of a missionary field between two societies in utter disregard of the wishes and affinities of the people themselves, can fail to sympathise with Dr. Beaumont's deep regret and the still deeper regret of the people concerned. It is a monitory lesson against allowing the most commendable wish of two religious organisations not to come into each other's way to override the sacred rights of conscience and affection in the parties disposed of against their will. The affair, though well meant entirely, was not creditable on the whole either to the good sense or good feeling of either of the two great missionary committees.

Mr. Beecham proposed the Committee of Review should consist of "the first row of ex-Presidents."

An arrangement this which gives Connexional importance to the configuration and dimensions of the Wesleyan Methodist *platform*.

The President remarked : "There is a great deal of independency among us where there ought to be Presbyterianism."

The President : "I have received a letter from Nottingham stating that a probationer among us was, when a Local preacher, a believer in an unmethodistic doctrine, reprobation. I believe that he is now right, but he deserves admonition if he came into our Connexion whilst holding any doctrine contrary to our standards. His Chairman, the Superintendent of —, recommended him, and his present Superintendent must investigate the matter, and I think the inquiry should not be private."

Dr. Hannah : "I think if the writer of the letter is to be called a gentleman, the word will be used in a very loose sense. He should have spoken at the time."

Mr. Scott : "If we could have a Metropolitan Chapel Fund, it would be a great advantage. Small chapels are injurious. There is a memorial from Chelsea in reference to such a fund ; but as education matters are so pressing, it must wait a year."

This was the first suggestion of a Metropolitan Chapel Fund.

The President : "I think the matter should be laid before the Chapel Fund Committee. We must look after the whole question, and not release our people from their Connexional relations."

After 10s. 6d. has been paid by each Preacher there is still a considerable deficiency in the sum required for the new Kingswood chapel. The question arose whether a further contribution should be imposed upon the brethren at

home, or the missionaries be required to take their share in the subscription. J. Fowler moved: "That as the missionary brethren have the same privileges with regard to the schools as their brethren at home, they are under the same obligation to contribute to the building of a school chapel." The Missionary Secretaries met this with a peremptory *No*. Mr. Mason: "I complain that the Secretaries should throw their shield over the missionaries against a fair claim upon them." Mr. Scott: "They ought to pay. We at home, who have no sons to send to either school, have all paid."

The President: "If you can vote money out of the pockets of the absent, then those who think that we can impose burthens on others that we have imposed upon ourselves, show it." J. Fowler's motion was carried.

A long debate took place this year also on the case of Mr. Caughey. Mr. Vevers noticed the great impropriety of his conduct and his sayings in Hull. He had said, for example: "God Almighty is puzzled to determine whether Popery or Protestantism is damning more souls." Mr. Osborn: "I think as he occupies our pulpits for so long a time the doctrines which he preaches should be inquired into. It is plain, from what we have just heard, that report has not been altogether wrong." Mr. J. Stephenson regretted that the inquiry had been neglected, and urged its being instituted speedily. Mr. R. Waddy stated what odium he had incurred in refusing to invite him to York. He thought it high time that Conference should pronounce judgment on the subject.

Mr. Haswell: "I had seen Mr. Caughey's work at Leeds going on well. I only—not the Quarterly Meeting—invited him to Sheffield, where he preached for a month in the same chapel. I heard no extravagances from him. There was, I believe, great fruit of his ministry night after night. I and my colleague, Mr. B. Waddy, strictly inquired into the state of the converts."

The President: "How were the Preachers employed whose appointments he took?" Answer: "The Preachers were hearers."

Mr. Bell paid a very high tribute to Mr. Caughey's preaching and success, and had never heard or seen anything to equal it. The work was not confined to the lower orders.

Dr. Beaumont: "I know him well. I never knew a revival without irregularities, and never saw less than in this case. You say he is under no discipline; he is under the discipline of the minister of the Circuit in which he labours. He accumulates evangelistic pressure on a given spot. Our want of success is due to a want of continuity of effort. No engine driver has more power to stop his locomotive than the Superintendent has to stop his work. The man is well read; he is a philosopher. I should hold it to be a misfortune to say anything to his disparagement here. I should deprecate anything which would lead our people to doubt the genuineness of his work. Do allow this sort of thing which cannot be measured by rule and line. What is meant by 'testimonials?' Who is to give them? Bishop Hedding? No; the Superintendents of the Circuits in which the good man has laboured."

Mr. Reece: "I am glad to have heard explanations from the Sheffield Superintendents; I wish to hear the Superintendent of Hull West."

Mr. Martin: "I had nothing to do with his coming to Hull: all had been arranged before I arrived. He had 2,000 names on the list of persons who had found good."

Dr. Newton explained his own relation with Mr. Caughey, which had been the reverse of satisfactory. Many others followed.

Mr. Dixon: "I should deprecate any action of this Body condemnatory of Mr. Caughey. He is a philosopher; has an affinity to great things. I think him a clever man, and should hesitate to touch him. If we legislate on the matter, we must look into Mr. Jackson's 'Life of Charles Wesley.' We should not interfere with the work of God."

Mr. Jackson: "We must deny Methodism if we lay our restraining hands upon this man."

The President: "I have no objection to state my opinion. The brethren who have given up their pulpits to Mr. Caughey have been guilty of a great violation of godly discipline. It gives me, however, unfeigned pleasure that the brethren are all philosophers, and to hear continuity of services so strongly advocated. Of course, all will now stick to their Circuits, with the bright examples of Dr. Beaumont and Dr. Dixon before their eyes!"

Thus no *practical decision* was arrived at, but every Superintendent left to his own discretion in the matter, as before.

When the Address to the Queen was read, Mr. S. D. Waddy said: "I wish that we might be designated in our memorial as the 'Wesleyan Church.'"

The President: "I think it would be better not to use this term. It will injure your object by using it on all occasions."

On the reading of the Address to the Irish Conference, Dr. Beaumont said: "I think the commendation of ourselves and the condemnation of others much too strong."

Mr. Walton: "I think we represent the purest form of Christianity."

The President: "I think partly with Dr. Beaumont, I do not approve of political allusions in our documents, nor the apparent condemnation of other Christian Bodies, nor the eulogium on our theological students. And what is said about myself I wish sent back to the committee."

The report on the *Education Scheme* showed that the large committee specially summoned on the question had taken up the matter with a will. It had been resolved to raise at once £20,000 for fresh schools. Of this sum £12,700 had been already raised, £1,778 of which had been contributed by ministers. Wesleyan Methodism had evidently made up its mind to have its full share in the education of the people, and not abandon so great a power to the clergy and the Romish priesthood. The shareholders of the Taunton school received the thanks of Conference for a handsome contribution to the fund.

Next came the great debate on the Sheffield and Taunton Proprietary Schools. Mr. Keeling had found himself in the alternative awkwardness of governing the directors or being directed by them. He therefore handed in his resignation.



Mr. ex-President Scott read a letter from the proprietary, submitting the names of J. P. Haswell and S. D. Waddy.

Mr. Haswell : "I move that Mr. S. D. Waddy be appointed. He is the proper man. But I think Mr. Keeling should speak."

Mr. Keeling : "I have no wish to occupy the time of Conference. But, as Journal Secretary, I will read the minute of the Conference with regard to my appointment." (He read it.) "The conditions on which I was appointed the directors have entirely disregarded in the letter and resisted in the spirit. In respect to the religious instruction or training, I have had no *direct* interference, but the minds of the youths have been prejudiced against my religious teaching by their being told by the directors that, but for the interference of the Governor, they would fare much better at their meals. Between me and the head master there has been nothing but friendly co-operation. But obstruction has arisen from the construction put by the directors upon the word Governor, attached to my name in the *Minutes* of the Conference. According to their view, the Governor is little more than an authorised spy upon the youths, the masters, and the domestics residing in the establishment. According to their regulations, the Governor may dismiss an underservant; he may send a boy on errands, he must carry on the correspondence with the parents of the youth, and it is his privilege to do the whipping of the institution. But the internal government of the house is incessantly interfered with from without. I am told by the directors that the point is as plain as the way to market. The name of Governor gives no power to govern, beyond the points just named. I concur in the opinion that Mr. Waddy is the most suitable man for the place in many respects."

Mr. McLean : "I hope that Mr. Waddy will be appointed Governor, because I think that then the school will *be governed*. I disapprove of government and religious and moral training by a joint stock company. It must be under the government of some *one person*. If the directors had any genuine Yorkshire *gumption*, they would see this. The directors could never have brought things to such a pass unless they had been countenanced from outside. From first to last the Governor has been counteracted by petty-fogging, petty-meddling men in Sheffield and in London, in opposition to the Conference."

Mr. Fowler, at this stage, made a very characteristic deliverance, in which he took the present bearings of the question and ascertained its latitude and longitude. His practical deduction was : "We must come nearer to the Sheffield school or go farther from it." He held that the present position was altogether untenable. It was unfair to the Conference, placing it in a most awkward and undignified dilemma, and taking up its precious time, year after year, with the discussion of matters which ought to have been settled before we had anything to do with the affair. The yearly settlement of these irritating disagreements between the directors and the Governor were a very serious drain upon the time and temper of the Conference. It

was unfair to the work of God—taking from one of your choicest Circuits one of your best, most earnestly desired, and sorely needed men to be lectured and worried by the directors of a company, and made their scapegoat to the shareholders when they lack a dividend, and to the parents when the boys do not like their victuals. The constitution of the establishment should be first made such as we can approve of and work along with before we condemn an inestimable brother to the task of serving two masters, the Conference or the directors of a company, who do not see things in the light in which Conference is bound to look at them.

Dr. Dixon: "There are two parts in the constitution—one is immutable, the other can be rendered alterable. By the constitution, nothing but Methodism can be taught there. You have a chapel there settled in our way, but, what is most important, here you have 150 boys who will influence Methodism in future. Ought they to be under the spiritual guard of a local preacher? I should not like this. The spiritual state and principles of our youth should not be sacrificed to anything else. We may maintain this in the midst of perplexity, and wait for better days. I am sure that pure, unsophisticated wisdom is not sufficient to manage these economic enterprises. Let us try Mr. Waddy." (A smile.) "He has a great deal of tact, and has had the management of the whole thing from the beginning. He knows these men, and has a great influence. Many think him absolutely essential. He will exercise an impalpable wisdom. Let us have no more quarrelling. The brethren stationed in Sheffield must all support the Governor. At the monthly ministers' meeting we used to talk about the school, and follow the judgment and take the part of the Governor. Send Mr. Waddy. We cannot afford to let Sheffield school be swamped. For this position you want an educated man, a strong man, a devout man, a man of dignity, and, above all, a very grave man." (Hear, hear, hear!) "Then send Mr. Waddy." (Cheers and laughter.)

Dr. Beaumont remarked that, whatever might be said of the sophistication or the impalpability of Mr. Waddy's wisdom, Mr. Keeling could compete with him in *gravity*.

Mr. Scott: "I think we should not appoint another Governor until a change be made in the arrangements. I would have Mr. Waddy appointed, but with instructions from the Conference—written, if necessary—as to the work and duties which, in our view, are attached to the office of Governor, and for the performance of which he is responsible to us, and to no other body whatsoever."

The President then made a speech of great power and pungency, and of considerable length, as a speech from the Chair.

His chief points were: "That the Conference ought not—by the appointment of one of its members to the nominal Governorship—to lend the prestige of its public patronage to any private undertaking whatsoever, over the

internal management of which it had not the real and effective authority of which the appointment was intended to afford a guarantee to the parents and the public. Without this the appointment was a delusion and injustice. There were in Yorkshire, in the adjoining counties, and the Midlands, many Methodist schools which had won and kept a deserved reputation. Why should the Wesleyan Methodist Conference go out of its way to draw the youths from these schools to that of a joint stock company who have refused to adapt their deed to the requirements which that appointment obliges us to make? And in the eastern and western counties there are several schools of the like class—for instance, Mr. Shaw's school in Somersetshire. Why draw pupils away from such establishments to a school the constitution of which has never been submitted to us, and, when disapproved, persisted in in spite of us? We have now before us an appeal for a similar proprietary school in Somersetshire. Grant a Conference sanction and appointment to a school in Yorkshire, and to another in the West of England, and what is to prevent Cornwall, and Northumberland, and Birmingham, and London from making the self-same request? And how can you give the one any other answer than you give the other? True, Mr. Waddy was a great friend of education, and so he was of cheap and honest physic. How could we appoint a man like Dr. Beaumont to be Governor and Chaplain of a wholesale establishment for the manufacturing of Wesleyan Methodist pills or Conference ointment, if the deed of partnership precluded his ascertaining the wholesomeness and effectiveness of the medicine labelled with the honourable name of Wesley?"

This speech was delivered with all the gravity and the judicial dignity and authority of a charge to the jury from the Bench. On at least one listener in the gallery it fell with great force and weight, although the piquancy of the illustration about physic did seem rather daring and sarcastic.

The President added: "The question is twofold. I will ask (1) Will you appoint a Governor to Sheffield school for this year, notwithstanding the constitution which you have condemned?" Answer, "Yes."

This was carried with acclamation.

The President: "Is it your wish that the Rev. S. D. Waddy be the Governor, with instructions to the clerical members of the governing body to see if there be anything which interferes with the exercise of that discipline which the Connexion should require from all that have the influence of its name."

This was *carried unanimously*.

Mr. Cooke then read a memorial applying for the appointment of the Rev. R. Ray as Governor of the Taunton school.

Mr. G. Osborn moved, and Dr. Beaumont seconded, "That the request be granted."

The President: "In what respect does the Taunton school differ from other respectable schools kept by private Methodist gentlemen?"

Dr. Beaumont: "This school is Methodist in its *foundation*, and is to be thoroughly Methodist. Its object is to keep the children of our people to us."

Mr. Cooke: "You may mould the school as you please."

Mr. Walker: "Let us deal with Taunton as we did with Sheffield. Begin by appointing a supernumerary."

Mr. Ray then gave an account of the school: "All the Superintendent ministers in the District have the same right to vote as the proprietary. The Conference must perceive that it will require vigilance on the part of the Governor. I have taken some care of the school."

The President: "By what authority has Mr. Ray done this? It is a direct violation of the Methodist rule. I cannot sit here and see one after another appointed to schools. Let me go home; it will be a relief to my conscience. I will sign your Minutes." (Cries of "No, no.")

The President left the Chair, but was at length persuaded to resume it.

Mr. Scott: "I propose that the Taunton friends be permitted to correspond with a supernumerary."

Dr. Beaumont: "Why cannot the Taunton case be put with no other qualification than that which was put by the President in the Sheffield case?" (Cries of "*Attacking the President.*")

The President: "I did not say that Dr. Beaumont was out of order. He has often thrown light on subjects. I beg that he may go on."

Dr. Beaumont then declared that, unless the President undertook the responsibility of pronouncing the motion to be unconstitutional, he could not feel at liberty to withdraw his seconding.

Mr. Ray: "I beg to answer the question put to me by the President a little while ago: 'By whose authority has Mr. Ray taken some care of the school?' I answer, By the decision of the committee of last year."

The President then apologised to Mr. Ray for having asked a question and refused to hear an answer.

Mr. Walker: "I wish to know what is to become of the profits."

Dr. Newton: "I think it wrong to take men out of the regular work. I for one cannot consent to it."

Dr. Dixon: "I would request the mover and seconder of the motion to withdraw it. The Conference will be divided."

The mover did not answer, and the seconder had already made his withdrawal conditional on the pronouncement of its unconstitutionality by the President himself.

Mr. W. M. Bunting: "I would recommend the mover and seconder of the motion to throw it into the form of Mr. Scott's motion with regard to Sheffield, so as to countenance the school as far as possible on Connexional principles."

The President: "Mr. Ray must not be the Governor nor the manager of that school. I am sorry to find myself in this position; but I do hold that I am not a mere Chairman but your President, under the Deed of Declaration. As to Dr. Beaumont's argumentum ad hominem, it is not true that I approved of Sheffield. My deceased friend, Mr. Grindrod, did wrong; Mr. Waddy did wrong; and Mr. McLean did wrong in proposing to drop the word supernumerary after his name. To him it was personal. The Sheffield case is peculiar. I doubt the wisdom of Mr. Waddy's going. And when I hear 'The more the better,' I cannot be silent. I do not approve of this West of England isolation. Perhaps I am wrong; if so, I beg pardon of God and of you."

Mr. Cooke: "I believe it would have been better to appoint Mr. Ray, and that the Conference is with me; but out of respect to the President I will undertake the responsibility of withdrawing the request of the committee."

So the motion of Mr. G. Osborn and Dr. Beaumont fell to the ground.

The next morning Mr. Cooke proposed: "That Brother Tucker should have his name on the Minutes as Governor of Taunton school, with the word supernumerary after his name."

The President: "We want a different school, superior to Sheffield. Sheffield has been spoiled. If it can be brought back to its original purpose, all well and good. But as it is now, we may as well have a Methodist shoe shop, a Methodist quack doctor, or even a Methodist newspaper. Supposing the Sheffield premises should have to be sold, and each shareholder lose £50 or £70, by a scheme to which the Conference is committed? Why set ourselves against private schools?"

The Conference did not sanction the insertion of the name of any Governor of Taunton in the Minutes.

A complaint was lodged against Dr. Beaumont for not having taken the whole of his missionary deputation work.

Dr. Beaumont: "For six days I had not preached a sermon; and I will not go about making and hearing miserable speeches for four or five hours a day. I will not spend my time in such a manner, unless compelled by the inexorable power of Conference. I beg to be left off the deputation list. It will be an accommodation to me. All the Preachers in the Liverpool North Circuit were appointed on missionary deputations at the same time."

A letter was received from Sir A. Agnew on the Sabbath question.

The President promised to co-operate with him in the good work.

Twelve thousand seven hundred pounds have been received in *subscriptions* to the Education Fund. A collection to be made on the last Sunday in November to raise it to £20,000. A series of resolutions was passed.

The President: "To object to Government aid to denominational schools would be Methodist sectarianism."

Mr. W. M. Bunting: "I wish that a copy of our Standard Works could be presented to the library of the Free Church College." Carried unanimously.

A letter was read from a brother retracting his doctrinal errors.

The President: "Satisfactory as to its spirit, but not satisfactory as to its statements." Dr. Hannah, Dr. Newton, Mr. Lomas, and Mr. Osborn are to converse with him and advise him not to publish a speculation with regard to hereditary depravity.

The President at the opening of the last session said: "No Preacher is allowed to leave the Conference till its close. It is miserable to be reduced to the legal number. We must have the appearance of a Conference." A minute was read from the York District demurring strongly to the powers exercised by the July Committee in London.

The President proposed that five brethren from the country should be added to it.

The stations were not confirmed till 10.30 on the last morning. The Pastoral Address was to be reduced by the Editor.

The President: "I think, as I have to sign it, I ought to see it before it goes to press." (Agreed.)

The President, after signing the Journal, expressed his belief that the Body was never in a more peaceful or united state, and asked the forgiveness of any brother to whom he might have given pain.

It will be seen that the One Hundred and First Conference was not without its special significance. It not only began chronologically a new century of the Conferences but it marked a turning point in what may be called the ecclesiastical politics of Wesleyan Methodism. For about thirty years the polity of Methodism had been shaped, and its policy determined, almost wholly by one master-mind, who had taken alike the initiative, the elaboration, and the completion of its most important measures—had been its oracle, and the director of its movements. He was now in the Chair of Conference for the fourth and last time, and was, at the age of sixty-six, in the ripe and rich maturity of his intellectual powers. He betrayed not the faintest sign of that "bewilderment of thought" of which he spoke in his opening address, any more than of wavering in will, or hesitancy in ruling. On the contrary, one could not but feel how grand a thing it is to see a great office greatly filled by the greatest man of all, for it was plain that here the *causing* man was king, and he might still have said of his present self: "My glory was fresh in me, and my bow was renewed in my hand." One could not but feel "How forcible are right words!" as he said the very thing that wanted saying in the very way in which it was fittest to be said.

But a change was coming over the Conference: it would seem unwittingly or, in any wise, without concert or confederacy. For many years there had been a finality in the pronouncements of Dr. Bunting against which it was vain to rebel.

But now the tide perceptibly began to turn. Although the perpetual President was now for the fourth time the occupant of the Chair, yet successive resolutions were carried against his warmly and strongly argued, and emphatically enunciated judgment, till at last, when it became plain that another motion to which he had earnestly objected would almost certainly be carried, he abruptly left the Chair, and declared that he would sign the Journal, thus dissolving the Conference before the stations were confirmed and much of the most important business

yet unfinished. Happily, he was persuaded to resume his seat, and made graceful, gentlemanly apology to the brother to whose answer to his question from the Chair he had refused to listen—but not to the Conference. On the contrary, he held himself to be the aggrieved party, and vindicated the position he had taken up and, as it seemed, intended to maintain, by laying down a doctrine of Presidential prerogative, alike unknown to the Constitution and to the usages of Conference. He took upon himself to determine peremptorily and definitely a question which he had allowed Conference to discuss but not to decide. He declared *Mr. Ray must not be* the Governor or manager of that school. This was, of course, a prohibition of the carrying of the resolution which had been allowed to be moved and seconded, and a nullification and stultification of the foregoing discussion on the subject, the motion being, "That the request of the committee of Taunton School for the appointment of the Rev. Richard Ray as Governor be granted."

Of course every President has the right, inasmuch as he has the responsibility, of ruling out of order, and inadmissible, any motion which is unconstitutional in its terms or substance. The President who, in such a case, cannot set his foot down firmly and say: "That is an unconstitutional proposal, and cannot be entertained," is not fit for his position. But the time for doing this is clearly as soon as the resolution is moved. A resolution which "must not be" voted for in the affirmative ought not to be discussed at all. Nay, every reasonable effort should be made to prevent its introduction. It very seldom happens that such a motion is contemplated without the President becoming cognisant in some way of the fact that it is intended. In that case the peaceable and prudent course is plain. Having satisfied himself of the firmness of his ground, he secures an interview with the intending mover, and points out to him the unconstitutionality of his motion. Should it be still brought forward, either directly or in a quasi-incidental, parenthetical manner, the Presidential course is clear—to say with quiet firmness: "That point is settled and must not be mooted or disturbed." If, again, a speaker should spring upon the Conference an irrelevant contentious matter—political or other—it is the duty of the President to recall the aberrant orator to the question now before the house.

But all this stops widely short of the power assumed by Dr. Bunting. After an orderly discussion on a matter which was

admitted to be neither unconstitutional nor irrelevant, brought forward in the most regular manner at the point in the proceedings fixed on by the President, he claimed the right to decide that the motion must not be carried. In this position he resolutely entrenched himself, and fortified it by an appeal to the constitutive Deed of Declaration: "I hold that I am not the mere chairman under the Deed of Declaration."

But the Deed of Declaration gives not the faintest intimation of any such Presidential power as the deciding which way the Conference should vote, if allowed to vote at all, on any question brought before it in the regular and proper way. All that the Poll Deed says upon the subject is simply this: "The said President shall have *the privilege and power of two members in all acts of the Conference during his Presidency*, and such other powers, privileges, and authorities as *the Conference* shall from time to time see fit to entrust into his hands." Now the Conference had never entrusted into the hands of the President any such power as to determine which way the majority should vote on any given question. All the power and authority which the Poll Deed gives the President beyond the power of two members and that which the name itself implies—namely, to *preside*—comes from Conference itself. No doubt the word President carries with it conventionally a degree of stateliness and dignity beyond that of *Chairman*, and was selected with that intent, but it carries with it in a deliberative assembly no such prerogative as was assumed by Dr. Bunting. Hence Dr. Osborn and Dr. Beaumont were justified in the nonwithdrawal of the motion. The entreaty that they should do so was clearly prompted by the dread of another lively scene, which, considering the temperament of the two parties immediately at issue, might have ended in a deplorable dead-lock.

This catastrophe was cleared by stout old Corbett Cooke, who, by withdrawing the request of the committee of which he was the chairman, relieved the strained relations of the President of the Conference.

The brethren drew their breath, but Dr. Bunting's point was gained. Taunton School had no recognition whatsoever on the stations.

The effect this new doctrine of the Presidency, affirmed and acted on by the greatest of the Presidents since Wesley himself, had upon the Conference was very marked. Every minister with whom I conversed upon the subject, or whom I heard conversing, regarded it as an innovating encroachment



yet unfinished. Happily, he was persuaded to resume his seat, and made graceful, gentlemanly apology to the brother to whose answer to his question from the Chair he had refused to listen—but not to the Conference. On the contrary, he held himself to be the aggrieved party, and vindicated the position he had taken up and, as it seemed, intended to maintain, by laying down a doctrine of Presidential prerogative, alike unknown to the Constitution and to the usages of Conference. He took upon himself to determine peremptorily and definitely a question which he had allowed Conference to discuss but not to decide. He declared *Mr. Ray must not be* the Governor or manager of that school. This was, of course, a prohibition of the carrying of the resolution which had been allowed to be moved and seconded, and a nullification and stultification of the foregoing discussion on the subject, the motion being, "That the request of the committee of Taunton School for the appointment of the Rev. Richard Ray as Governor be granted."

Of course every President has the right, inasmuch as he has the responsibility, of ruling out of order, and inadmissible, any motion which is unconstitutional in its terms or substance. The President who, in such a case, cannot set his foot down firmly and say: "That is an unconstitutional proposal, and cannot be entertained," is not fit for his position. But the time for doing this is clearly as soon as the resolution is moved. A resolution which "must not be" voted for in the affirmative ought not to be discussed at all. Nay, every reasonable effort should be made to prevent its introduction. It very seldom happens that such a motion is contemplated without the President becoming cognisant in some way of the fact that it is intended. In that case the peaceable and prudent course is plain. Having satisfied himself of the firmness of his ground, he secures an interview with the intending mover, and points out to him the unconstitutionality of his motion. Should it be still brought forward, either directly or in a quasi-incidental, parenthetical manner, the Presidential course is clear—to say with quiet firmness: "That point is settled and must not be mooted or disturbed." If, again, a speaker should spring upon the Conference an irrelevant contentious matter—political or other—it is the duty of the President to recall the aberrant orator to the question now before the house.

But all this stops widely short of the power assumed by Dr. Bunting. After an orderly discussion on a matter which was

admitted to be neither unconstitutional nor irrelevant, brought forward in the most regular manner at the point in the proceedings fixed on by the President, he claimed the right to decide that the motion must not be carried. In this position he resolutely entrenched himself, and fortified it by an appeal to the constitutive Deed of Declaration: "I hold that I am not the mere chairman under the Deed of Declaration."

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of power upon privilege, of office upon order, which was in no wise to be allowed.

But how was it to be resisted in the most peaceable and quiet way? The brethren saw that the case would best be met by not putting into the Chair anyone who would be at all likely to stand on it, rather than sit in it. Hence a powerful impetus was given to the turning tide of the ecclesiastical politics of Methodism, for although in 1844 there was nothing in the Conference which bore the slightest semblance to faction or to party, yet there were perceptibly two sides to the house, not separated indeed by a hard and fast line, not hindering at all the treating of every question on its merits. So healthful and harmonious were the internal relations of the Conference during the earlier part of its proceedings, that the strongest indication of there being two sides was the specially marked and sensitive courtesy and deference paid by each side to the other. Thus Dr. Bunting's style and manner towards Mr. Fowler and Dr. Beaumont was notably respectful and considerate, as to men whose judgment carried with it more than ordinary weight. But so accustomed had Dr. Bunting been, by the space of thirty years, to carry Conference with him, whether in the Chair or not, that now, when he found himself for the fourth time President, and yet for the first time worsted in the measures upon which his heart was set and his pleading power exerted, he could not conceal his sense of humiliation and of mortification at what appeared to be a loss of prestige and prescriptive right. This, at least, was the impression made, so far as I could gather, by his unprecedented leaving of the Chair when a debate seemed to be tending in a direction opposite to that which he had indicated.

On the other side was the honest, hearty recognition of the legitimate and salutary *prestige* of the greatest man in the Connexion, who filled its highest office with a competence and an efficiency which no other man could reach. Witness Dr. Beaumont cancelling his engagement to follow Dr. Chalmers in preaching for the Stockport Sunday schools and his inestimable maxim, indispensable to the coherence and the continuity of a *Connexional* Church: "No brother has a right to gratify another Church by the disturbance of his own." William Griffith's *voluntary* pledge to abstain from politics was still more striking.

The effect upon the voting for the President at the next Conference was signal. Eleven years before, Mr. Stanley had been within fourteen votes of the Chair, but his unwillingness

to put his name to the officious London Declaration with regard to the non-existence of any undue personal or party influence in Conference had blocked his way to the Chair for a whole decade, during which he had been dangling in mid-air before his brethren. But now the times had changed. Mr. Stanley was borne into the Chair at the top of the wave, with a higher vote than Mr. Bunting had received the year before. The two next names upon the list, Atherton and Samuel Jackson, were from the same side. Only fourteen votes were given to men who were regarded as belonging to the party of centralisation and government from London: Dr. Alder, nine; Dr. Beecham, five. Atherton was in the Chair in 1846; S. Jackson in 1847; and if the turn had not come round for the most beloved and best known of his brethren, Dr. Newton, Mr. Fowler would unquestionably have been the President in 1848.

The significance of this was obvious. At the last long *tête-à-tête* I had with Dr. Osborn, we talked this over thoroughly. We quite agreed as to the cause of Dr. Bunting's sudden demonstration and its effect upon the subsequent elections. It is to be noted that up to this time, and later, in the seventeenth year of his ministry, Dr. Osborn belonged, if to any party at all, to that of frank outspokenness and of unfettered voting. Hence in 1844 he joined Dr. Beaumont against Dr. Bunting in the case of Taunton school, and in 1845 he supported George Macdonald against the same redoubted champion in the matter of State-aided education, and F. A. West in the attempt to cheapen Wesleyan Methodist literature.

On the whole, the impression by this One Hundred and First Conference on an eager and enthusiastic neophyte was in a high degree arousing, heartening, bracing, and upbuilding. One felt that he was being enrolled amongst a goodly fellowship of apostolic men, devout and simple-minded, happy-hearted, honest, genial, and kindly, and withal capable and shrewd. The devotional exercises gave a cogent illustration of the President's description of the ex-Roman priest, "He prays like a Methodist Preacher." It was noteworthy that the mightiest prayers arose from the platform, from such veterans as Marsden and Taylor. Another very notable fact was the fewness of the speakers. Not more than twenty-seven persons took part in the debates. Of these few, if any, on the floor of the house were on their feet so often as Mr. Samuel Dunn. But his utterances were so ejaculatory

and so hard and sharp in tone as to leave next to no impression on the mind of what was "piped," and there was nothing "harped." Hence Mr. Fowler's record takes no notice of his speeches, yet his appearance was remarkably interesting.

Another notable thing was the lengthiness of evening sittings. Although Conference began daily at half-past eight a.m., yet it sometimes sat till ten p.m., quarter-past ten, or half-past ten, and often till nine, quarter-past, or half-past nine o'clock p.m.

## CHAPTER VII.

### THE GATHERING STORM.

**THE** Conference of 1845 was held in Leeds, under the Presidency of Jacob Stanley. He went for an old man by this time, being in his seventieth year—two years older both naturally and ministerially than the great man who now resigned the seal of office for the fourth time. There was but one election into the One Hundred by nomination.

The President (Dr. Bunting) remarked: "Mr. Lomas is down for City Road, and at present no one on that station is in the Hundred. It is important that the man whose name stands first in the stations should be in the deed. To the disgrace of the City Road trustees, they refuse a Preacher to preside at their meetings."

Mr. Lomas: "I am sensible of the distinction which this vote has conferred upon me. It becomes me to be humble even more than grateful. This is a truly evangelical election. It is 'according to the election of grace, not of works, lest any man should boast.' I feel that this election confers as much responsibility as honour. I hope to have grace to employ my increased influence for the glory of God."

Dr. Beaumont supported the vote of thanks to the retiring President, strongly emphasising his having moderated the feeling of the Body on semi-political matters; but he did not go with him in petitioning the Queen to dissolve the Parliament.

Here Dr. Alder rose to order, and the President observed: "Many approved what Dr. Beaumont disapproves."

This statement was loudly cheered and clapped. The speech of Mr. Reece in seconding the vote of thanks bore the stamp of his own nature, especially in view of the determined opposition which Dr. Bunting had persisted in to the allowing Mr. Reece a young man excepting at his own expense.

Mr. Reece: "I have reasons for wishing to second this resolution. This may be the last time I shall have such an opportunity. I have known Jabez Bunting from the very first, but I have never known his like in devotion to the interests of Methodism, night and day. The gales he has outridden are

past, never to return. I hope his course will be closed pleasantly. Others can talk better than I can, but no one can think more highly of him than I do."

Dr. Dixon: "I rise to propose an addition to the vote—especial thanks for his faithful defence of Protestant principles in opposition to the Maynooth grant." (*Carried unanimously.*)

Dr. Bunting: "I have often found myself in circumstances of great embarrassment, but never more so than at present. I have first to thank Almighty God for my early connection with Methodism, and especially with the Methodist ministry. I am deeply humbled and unaffectedly conscious that I am not worthy of the goodness and mercy He has shown to me. During forty-six years I have been connected with the Conference. With respect to the last Conference and the past year, I beg pardon of any brother to whom I may have spoken and acted improperly. I apologise to my friends in Scotland, and thank Mr. Scott for supplying my lack of service. I feel thankful to Dr. Beaumont for having spoken out in a manly way, but I do believe that I acted in harmony with the majority in petitioning her Majesty. I did not expect such cordial thanks. I am more than ever attached to Methodism—its doctrine and its discipline. Whilst it adapts itself to altered circumstances, it is opposed to revolutionary movements even as to organisation; not abandonment, but adaptation."

Dr. Beaumont: "I think there should be times appointed for the transaction of financial business during Conference; the disturbance of our consultations by the buzz and clink of personal and private monetary matters is insufferable."

Mr. G. Osborn gave notice of motion in relation to "the training of our children."

A student had been dismissed from the Institution.

Dr. Bunting: "Many thought he might go into a Circuit; I thought differently. It ought to be a principle that no one thrust out of the Institution should be employed in a Circuit. But as he has conducted himself properly in the interval, I think it would be well to admit him on trial."

Mr. Bowers: "When the officers of the Institution have judged a man unfit for the Institution their power over him terminates."

The case of Mr. Punshon was named, who had been labouring in the Maidstone Circuit, whom Mr. Reece stated to have been very acceptable. Dr. Bunting and Mr. J. Farrar also spoke in his favour. Through some indulgence on the part of Dr. Hannah, a young man at Didsbury had lost his claim to have his second year at the Institution counted as the first of his probation.

Dr. Hannah: "I wish to take all the blame; it springs from my own foolish heart."

Dr. Bunting: "I am sorry I cannot contradict Dr. Hannah. It *was* foolish. We must show no favour, but keep to our rule."

The Conference gave up its second evening in favour of a meeting of the Education Committee. Mr. Fowler notes "the zeal of our lay friends" on the matter of Wesleyan day schools, and exulted in the decision "that the school buildings should be free from debt."

Mr. Prest gave notice of motion for appointing Chairmen by some other means than election by ballot.

Dr. Beaumont : " I give notice of an amendment to that motion." (Loud cheers.) The notice was withdrawn.

Dr. Bunting : " I have appointed a brother to write the Pastoral Address, and will suggest matters, as is the privilege and duty of the President."

A brother who had written a book containing doctrine contrary to our standards, on being interrogated, confessed that he now saw that he was in the wrong. A young brother who had been reprehended from the Chair at the District Meeting was heard in his own defence. He said : " I am substantially innocent. I charge the brethren with a technical want of love. Unfavourable appearances may sometimes cover intentional excellences. I cannot make an apology for not having done wrong; that would be to filiate a fault upon myself. I am not given to much self-estimation." Mr. Stephenson rose to order.

Dr. Bunting : " I agree that the brother is wandering, but the Conference is so charmed by his simplicity and rhetoric that it is a pity we should not be entertained a little longer."

The President : " Does the brother appeal from the decision ? "

The brother : " I appeal to the bar of Heaven."

Dr. Bunting : " I think our brother cannot have any very serious complaint against his District Meeting."

The brother : " It lowers my influence in my family."

A Superintendent proved guilty of an illegal expulsion was required to rectify the wrong.

Dr. Bunting : " Is there no protest from the York District against Mr. Everett's continuing on the supernumerary list when he shows himself able to preach over such a wide extent of country ? "

Mr. D. Walton (Chairman) : " He is not able to preach on winter evenings." This was shown to apply only to places in his own Circuit, as he preached winter and summer in different parts of the land.

On the reading of the Book Committee's report, Mr. Osborn and Mr. West reasoned very ably and clearly on the importance of cheapening our literature, after the example of the Church of Rome and the Church of Scotland, and other Churches. Benson's *Life of Fletcher* could be bought more cheaply than at the Book Room. The idea of a *Quarterly Review* was also started.

Dr. Bunting defended the caution of the Steward and committee. He argued that as so many departments of the work of God were to such a large extent dependent on the profits of the Book Room, it could not afford an adventurous policy like that of private publishing houses. About a *Review*, Dr. Beaumont and many others agreed with Dr. Bunting as to the unwisdom of any such undertaking, unless the ground were quite secure, and he showed the unfairness of diverting moneys otherwise available for worn-out ministers and ministers' widows, home missions, etc., to an ambitious and unpaying literary undertaking. Dr. Bunting took the opportunity of insisting on the obligation of keeping constantly in view the chief object of our periodicals : the defence and exposition of revealed truth, and the record of spiritual experience.

This was supposed to refer to a change which had been introduced into the Magazine by the junior Editor, who had



brought in secular articles treated in a secular tone and spirit, such as a *Life of Lord Eldon*, treated in a very mundane fashion.

The proposal to sell old Kingswood and look out for another site drew forth from Dr. Beaumont a touching testimony to the soundness, alike of the scholastic and the Methodist teaching of the school. He said: "For five successive years of my boyhood I never slept a night away from Kingswood."

The increase of members during the year, though Dr. Bunting thought it small, was cheering—3,108. But it was derived from four Districts: London, 1,110; Sheffield, 1,425; Hull, 1,561; Manchester, 1,076.

J. Fowler asked: "What is meant by Mr. Arthur's being under the direction of the Missionary Committee?"

Dr. Bunting: "Mr. Arthur, being an Irishman, cannot have an English Circuit. He is anxious to go back to the missions, and his eyes only prevent it." The Conference said nothing, and the Secretary read on.

Mr. Samuel Dunn complained that the Stationing Committee had not appointed him to the Circuit he had selected. "I have not been properly treated for many years."

(Yet Halifax, where he had last been, was felt good enough for and by such men as Jabez Bunting, Theophilus Lessey, Thomas Galland, William Bunting, Joseph Fowler, and F. A. West.)

Dr. Bunting strongly condemned the assumption of such a claim and attitude by any member of the Conference.

On a financial question Mr. Osborn differed in opinion from the President. Many spoke noisily, and great confusion ensued. Our opposition to Maynooth had cost £400.

Dr. Bunting: "I fear that, in spite of ourselves, we must sometimes have to do with public measures."

J. Fowler suggested that the London Superintendents should be on the Sub-Committee of Privileges.

Dr. Bunting: "Better have no committee rather than that. We must have a confidential committee."

Dr. Dixon: "The action of Methodism against Maynooth has told on England and the world."

Dr. Bunting: "Mr. Prest has done us great honour."

Dr. Bunting: "I am glad I am not the representative of a District. We require some men unconnected with local interests to look after the general good. Men are miserably one-eyed, and look only at local interests. I could publish a book, and say what a representative does and what he ought to do. We are now exercising our high trust for the general good."

The report of the Chapel Fund Committee gave Mr. Fowler the opportunity of delivering, in the form of a resolution, his most effective protest against chapel debts. Some of our best chapels were declared to be in a state of most serious financial embarrassment. Cherry Street chapel, Birmingham, was, in the serious judgment of the Chapel Committee, in an appalling condition. Mr. Fowler incessantly holds up the "strangeness" of a Christian Church, as well as private Christians, involving themselves in responsibilities which they have no reasonable prospect of being able to discharge. He was powerfully supported by Mr. Vevers and others.

Dr. Beaumont : "Our chapel debts are overwhelming. But a plan of action which would do well for Melton would not work at Liverpool. We must devise some plan which will not injure our other funds. Great caution must be used, but we must set about the matter promptly and powerfully. These debts are a scotching of our wheels. We are so bothered with making both ends meet that we are weakened morally and damaged evangelically."

But the most striking speech in opposition was the maiden speech of Samuel Romily Hall. He had put an effective question at the foregoing Conference ; but it was this Leeds speech that started him on his Conferential career.

He said : "There is danger of misunderstanding and wrong feeling on the matter. In the Trust Deed there is a commission to inquire into the appropriation of trust money ; but in the District Meeting this is passed hastily over. Trustees may lose their Methodism, and yet continue in office for life. Such men will do nothing for us unless they get the ministers they like."

Dr. Dixon : "I hail Mr. Hall's maiden speech, and think his will be a happy Conferential course. There was fine sense in his speech. But our young friend put some cases hypothetically. I understand that the surplus funds of a chapel are given into the hands of the Stewards. Do not let us raise a bugbear about Trustees. Who were our best friends in the Warren affair? A little aristocratic leaven thrown into Leaders' and Quarterly Meetings may do good. I should not like Trustees to be arraigned by the Conference. I cannot see how our funds can be injured by the relieving our chapel debts. Some of our best men have been alienated from us by chapel debts."

The President suggested a strong mixed committee on the subject.

Dr. Bunting was loudly called for, and said : "I shall speak in the committee when I have heard both sides. I would have a large committee—almost a convention, though that is too pompous a name. I would have authority to call together twenty-five ministers and twenty-five laymen. Mr. Hall's speech was very able. As to what to do with the Trustees, I have some doubt about the Model Deed. The movement cannot injure the

missionary collections. Any of you, or all of you put together, cannot do that."

The committee was agreed on.

The Sheffield school came again before the Conference, this time in a still more startling form.

Mr. S. D. Waddy presented to Conference a petition for permission to grant degrees to the students of Wesley College.

Dr. Bunting: "What have we to do with it? Mr. Waddy has been Yankyish, go-aheadish. We went into this as a school. We first appointed a supernumerary without a name on the Minutes. The representation to Sir James Graham, that the school, now called 'college,' is for divinity students is a perfect fraud."

Mr. Waddy: "I protest against such an imputation."

Dr. Bunting: "I make no separate personal imputation upon Mr. Waddy. I charge the thirty-two men who signed the application to the Home Secretary, in which the Sheffield proprietary school was described as 'a college for divinity students'—my own son among the rest—with having put their otherwise honourable names to a fraud. I move the order of the day."

This was carried by a considerable majority, Dr. Beaumont seconding Dr. Bunting's motion.

It is easy to understand the position of both parties in this debate. Mr. Waddy's, as I learnt from his own lips, was this: "A degree adds dignity to a man in the public eye, especially to a minister. We hope that a good few of our Sheffield youths will become ministers. Few Methodists who go to either university come away Methodists." Dr. Bunting's point was this: "Where will this at first very modest undertaking land us, under the pilotage of such an adventurous genius as that of Mr. Waddy? We are asked permission for the school to become in effect a university, conferring degrees, in divinity amongst the rest, on divinity students. In this case we must regard this proprietary school, now suddenly become a university, as either a third branch of our Theological Institution or as a rival of both branches, and we must add to the title in the Minutes of Governor and Chaplain that of Theological Tutor." Dr. Beaumont's point was: "Whatever you do for Sheffield you will have to do for Taunton. You must not make flesh of the Yorkshire school and fish of the school in the South-West. He had no objection to the name of Wesley being crystallised in the titles of the schools; but the curriculum of theology taught in Sheffield was altogether too scanty to entitle it to represent itself, and to claim recognition from

us and the British Government, on the ground that it is a college for divinity students. The Conference must be no party to such misrepresentation. It would involve us also in a grave practical difficulty. There is too little even of *Wesley's Works* taught at Sheffield for any such pretensions. The scheme needs much closer and longer looking into."

The Taunton memorial for the appointment of the Rev. R. Ray as Governor was again presented by Mr. Corbett Cooke, and seconded by Dr. Beaumont. The arguments were the same as the year before: The identity both of need and claim in the one place as in the other, the fact that travelling all the way from Cornwall to Sheffield and back two or three times a year involved a serious increase in the expense, and that, Taunton being situated in a more pastoral and less densely peopled district than was Sheffield, living was appreciably cheaper. It was carried without opposition that a minister be appointed, but to the latter clause of the petition an amendment was proposed that a supernumerary be appointed.

Against this Dr. Beaumont contended that every argument against the appointment of Mr. Ray was equally valid for the return of Mr. Waddy to a Circuit, and that the best available man was quite as much needed in the first as in the later years of all such institutions.

Mr. W. M. Bunting deprecated the distinction between supernumeraries and ministers.

Dr. Bunting: "What safeguards are there in the Taunton deed against the evils which so much troubled us at Sheffield? If Mr. Ray have particular gifts for this work, that may be a reason for his appointment."

Mr. Ray: "I am sure that it is the will of the Trustees that the deed should be in accordance with the pleasure of the Conference."

Mr. Scott: "Remembering our experience with the Sheffield school, I should very much wish to look gravely at this case. I see difficulties on both sides, but am inclined to think that the Conference might take the oversight of this school. I think it is not going out of our way to pay our best attention to Methodist schools." Mr. Ray was appointed.

Dr. Bunting: "Do the Sheffield scholars attend the college chapel only, and not stately Carver Street as well?"

Mr. Waddy: "That has been discontinued. Carver Street is too distant, and many, sometimes thirty, were in the habit of staying away from the service. The chief reason for going to Carver Street was that there was no congregation at the school chapel—sometimes only two besides the scholars. There was no sacramental service at the school chapel. We have thirty boys in Society. We have now a good congregation in the school chapel."

Dr. Beaumont: "I think it is a great misfortune that the head master does not attend the same place of worship with the scholars; and the wearing of the gown in the school chapel pulpit makes the boys think less of the Circuit

chapels and Preachers at home. I think Mr. Waddy has acted precipitately in again putting on a gown."

Dr. Newton: "I know boys who on returning home from Sheffield, having not found the gown and prayers, have found fault with the service as not being what it ought to be."

Dr. Bunting: "If there is now a good congregation from which the boys can hear a good hearty Methodist amen, I am more nearly satisfied, but the Circuit Preachers should take their turn in the school chapel, and thus link the school on to Sheffield Methodism."

Dr. Bunting: "You see what difficulties these schools will bring you into."

Dr. Dixon proposed a series of resolutions against Popery as patronised by Parliament.

Dr. Bunting: "Better leave them to a sub-committee."

The Committee of the Auxiliary Fund recommended that those supernumerary ministers whose domestic establishments and style of living were in accordance with their reputation for having possession of ample means, should be asked whether, in the distressed condition of the Fund, they could not forego their claim upon it.

This resolution Dr. Bunting strenuously opposed on the ground that it was "inquisitorial."

Mr. Scott, the Treasurer, replied: "Then tell us where to find the money. The Cornish people will never raise their sixpence a head so long as men are living among them in such style as Mr. — and others, and drawing from this fund."

Dr. Newton spoke to the same effect.

Dr. Bunting: "If Mr. Scott cannot face the storm, something must be done. The inquiry must be made in the most delicate and private way. I move: 'That the Conference adopts the report of the committee as its own report; that the Treasurers shall have such correspondence as they deem necessary with those who, as they think, ought to give up; and that the thanks of the Conference be given to those who do give up.' This will give almost unlimited powers of appeal to our well-conditioned supernumeraries on the part of the Auxiliary Fund Committee, as a confidential committee in whom we trust." This was carried with but three *Noes*.

I am in a position to state that the will of the Conference was carried out both in letter and in spirit. The Treasurers of the Fund, the Rev. J. Scott and James Wood, Esq., of Manchester, selected as the most suitable man for carrying on this correspondence the Rev. W. Barton, my own beloved colleague. But just at this juncture his health suddenly and completely broke down under the continued pressure of his Connexional and Circuit labours. A too faithful, vivid reminiscence of his early

life on the Huntingdonshire levels, an importunate Fen ague, always fastened on him when his strength ran down. He was ordered at once to drop all work, and betake himself to the South Coast without delay. In his extremity he entreated his young colleague to undertake the task, handing to me a list of some thirteen supernumerary ministers who were thought to come within the category designated by the Conference. This was the first little bit of Connexional work that ever fell into my hands.

Mr. Scott moved "the thanks of the Conference to the friends for raising the sum they have raised."

Dr. Bunting moved the thanks to the Treasurers of the Fund: "Let Dr. Beaumont put what epithets you please; he has a stock of them. No language can reach their claims."

Mr. Osborn read his Irish Address; an admirable document just seven minutes long.

Dr. Bunting: "Instead of saying 'men in authority are giving aid to Popery,' write 'statesmen of all parties.'"

The resolutions against Popery, as revised by the Committee, were adopted.

Dr. Bunting read a letter from Dr. Buchanan, of Glasgow, requesting the Conference to take the initiative against Popery, and to send delegates to a great evangelical anti-Popery meeting to be held in Liverpool.

Dr. Bunting: "I am not prepared to give any definite opinion. We all approve the object of the meeting. The essential genius of Methodism is Catholic. I wish that all the other Nonconformists were likeminded and therefore opposed to Popery. I think you should send your President, and one or two others might go with him."

Mr. W. M. Bunting explained that the object of the meeting was to promote union amongst evangelical Christians. A long conversation took place as to who should form the deputation. Mr. Bunting pressed the importance of his father's being at the meeting, which would combine energetic action with pleasant recreation.

Mr. McLean: "Without Dr. Bunting Methodism will not be represented."

The President: "I cannot allow it to be said that Methodism cannot be represented in the absence of Dr. Bunting."

Dr. Bunting: "I would rather go anywhere than be talked about in this way."

The President, Secretary, Dr. Bunting, Mr. W. M. Bunting, and Mr. Osborn were appointed.

The *Pastoral Address* occupied an hour and a quarter. Dr. Beaumont spoke in the highest terms of the Address to the Irish Conference, but feared the ministers would have great difficulty in obtaining the attention of congregations for an hour and a quarter to the Pastoral Address. He wished that the Pastoral Address could be made like to the Irish, "intelligible and rememberable."

Mr. Osborn said that his own former Address had come under the same condemnation. He thought, however, that the Book Room should publish it

as a pamphlet, it was so excellent ; leaving out the advice to Methodist shareholders in joint stock banks to sell out forthwith.

Dr. Bunting reintroduced the question of the Marriage Act. He said : " I disapprove of marriages being celebrated in a registrar's office. It appears to me that, in a cautious way, we might do that which some have done without permission. But we ought to have some regulations. Any Trustee may license a chapel. Next Conference we may have some laws. I propose ' That a committee be appointed in London, including several legal men, to draw up a code of regulations in reference to marriage.' "

Dr. Hannah : " Is it imperative on a minister to celebrate marriage in our chapels ? " Answer : " No. "

A minister of the Methodist Episcopal Church applied for transference to the British Conference.

Dr. Bunting : " Does he belong to the seceding pro-slavery party ? " Answer : " He does. " He was declined.

Dr. Bunting : " I understand Mr. Caughey is still living in this country, and occupying our pulpits year after year, and yet attending no Meeting where he can be questioned as to his teaching and his conduct. This is a new thing, and a bad thing ; if I retain my common sense, I sometimes doubt whether I have any when I see what is allowed to go on amongst us. "

Mr. Walton : " I am sure he would gladly come here, if invited. "

Dr. Beaumont : " He would make application if he could gain access. I believe he applied at Manchester unsuccessfully. "

Dr. Bunting : " My feelings have always been of the revival order. When young I took part in revival services. But I speak upon a point of ecclesiastical order. Mr. Caughey ought to be accredited to the Conference. "

Mr. W. M. Bunting : " Have we not leaned too much toward Caughey ? I think the Conference must take *some* notice of him. "

Dr. Bunting : " We cannot station Mr. Caughey, so as to make him responsible to a District Meeting. Is it true that Mr. Young was refused the pulpit at York by Mr. Caughey ? "

Mr. Young explained that his exclusion from the pulpit in the evening, after having preached in the morning, was not so much Mr. Caughey's doing as that of the Superintendent.

Mr. W. M. Bunting : " Does this giving up of one of our chapels by a Superintendent to Mr. Caughey for a length of time accord with the understanding and direction of the Conference ? " Answer : " No. "

Dr. Newton : " I would ask Mr. Abraham Farrar, Did not Mr. Caughey profess to come for a temporary visit ? "

Mr. Farrar : " He came to see his mother, and thought he ought to put himself into communication with the Conference. "

Mr. Walton : " Mr. Caughey's mother, when he left America, had been dead four years, and was buried in America. "

Mr. W. M. Bunting : " Many think they cannot be converted except in these visitations. "

Dr. Bunting : " There was a decision on the case last Conference. It was declared that no man should give up his pulpit for a month together. I have always been afraid to interfere between a preacher and his revival movements. I cannot bring my mind to interpose between what God appears to overrule

for good. But I have declared (and thought that the Conference approved) that no man should occupy a Methodist pulpit for a month to the exclusion of the preachers appointed by the Conference. Every honest man should say that Mr. Caughey ought now to go back and give his fellow-countrymen the benefit of his rare gifts. Let us catch his zeal and fervour; and let the Americans have a chance. He does say very improper things, and then pauses, and looks as if he had delivered some supernatural communication, such as, '*A young man who now sits before me will die within twelve months.*' He passes off as revelation things that are either fancy or fraud."

Mr. Scott: "I have seen such a development of this system as, if not checked, must lead to a divisive stage."

Mr. Burdsall: "It is high time to inquire into the various bearings of this matter. Some of them, I fear, are very painful."

I have sad cause to remember Mr. Caughey's baneful mannerism of delivering an anonymous quasi-supernatural death warrant to whatever youthful member of his congregation might "feel like" appropriating it. A dear schoolfellow of my own, and lifelong friend—a youth endowed with a fine and noble genius, who has become well known in the realm of art and letters—had the mishap to hear Mr. Caughey preach at the beginning of the year from one of his favourite texts: "This year thou shalt die." As usual, he made the announcement which formed an essential part of the performance: "There sits before me now," etc. This was delivered with the air of a prophetic messenger, who seemed to the susceptible young man to fix upon him his solemn and authoritative gaze. The result was that he felt himself doomed; went home and shut himself up in his room, and never left it till the church chimes rang on next New Year's Day, and proved the illusive-ness of the vaticination. But, to his dying day, his nervous system never quite recovered from the shock it then received. This "hit or miss" prediction is shockingly unscrupulous.

The Conference of 1845 was, on the whole, very healthy and harmonious. There was hard hitting, but the blows were "honest blows." On the education question the unanimity was all but absolute. The great committees in London and in Leeds had pretty nearly talked each other into the same mind. At the London committee, which I had the privilege of attending, there were but two dissentients from the policy of multiplying Wesleyan Methodist day schools; but they were redoubtable opponents: *the two Georges*—George Osborn and George B. Macdonald.

Mr. Everett came over from York to Leeds to be present



at the Conference ; but he took no part in the discussions, and apparently no interest in the proceedings—not even in the conversation on his own indefatigably itinerant supernumeraryship. This is conspicuous in his own account of the matter. It consists almost wholly of a description of a profile likeness of “myself” which the Rev. J. W. Thomas took by stealth. His further notice of the Conference is as follows : “I had not been present at one for eleven years, and should not have attended this but for the purpose of giving a vote for the Rev. J. Stanley as President. He was carried by a triumphant majority.”

The reason why Mr. Everett could not defend his remaining a supernumerary on the ground of inability to preach or travel in the winter, is shown by the very next paragraph in his “Life” (December 17th, 1845) : “In this journey I preached four times, delivered one address, slept a night in a railway carriage, and travelled forty-eight hours ; but praise God for journeying mercies !” He adds : “During this year (1845), apart from ordinary work (in and near York), 9,182 miles.”

Yes ; a very fair amount of work, it must be owned, for a man who claimed to be pensioned as a *worn-out* minister, physically disabled for the work of a Circuit.

Two future Presidents were this year received on trial—E. E. Jenkins and J. H. Rigg.

#### BRISTOL CONFERENCE, 1846.

The Hundred and Third Conference was held at Bristol, under the Presidency of William Atherton. There was but one election into the Hundred by nomination. Mr. Fowler proposed Dr. Beaumont. Seven other men of mark were also nominated, but Dr. Beaumont received 157 votes, the next below him, a future President, having only fifty-nine.

Dr. Beaumont, in acknowledging his election, remarked that he should not be able, like so many of his junior predecessors in this honour, to promise any increase in his services to the Body. In the thirty-second year of his ministry, and having passed the meridian of life, “I feel even physically that ‘I must decrease,’ but I trust that I shall be humbly and zealously devoted to the service of the Body.”

Dr. Bunting now took what, I think, was a unique step. He addressed the Conference on the choice of their President. He said :

"I feel afraid of taking a liberty, but will venture on a few words. I am sorry to have anything like the collision which occurs in popular elections. Some men will uphold the good principle of independency by differing from others. But we are no longer the quite unobserved people we once were. Formerly, no person cared who was our President. It is not so now. Inferences are drawn from elections, which we should not wish to have drawn, with regard to the principle of union among ourselves. We ex-Presidents, whatever may have been our opinion, will act in submission to the Body."

Mr. Vevers: "I enter my protest against canvassing in any form, or any attempt to influence the voting for the President. Better have an outspoken nomination at once."

Most of us, I think, will agree with Mr. Vevers. All attempts to influence the voting for the President should be resisted and resented. The value of the vote is in its spontaneity, as representing the aggregate individual judgment of the brethren. It would be very unsafe to conjecture the precise drift of Dr. Bunting's speech. Whatever that might be, the President was again chosen from the other side of the house. William Atherton was raised to the chair by 208 votes out of the 251 given in all, the next below him being Thomas Jackson, twenty.

Mr. Fowler had given Mr. A. a gentle hint not to allow his satiric genius so much license in the Chair as he was wont to do elsewhere. He was now well stricken in years, for it was his ministerial jubilee.

He said: "If I had anticipated this honour, I would have prepared a suitable sermon, but I shall have to treat the Conference not as sons of Levi but as sinners of the Gentiles. When I look at the amazing intellects before me, I think this office requires more gravity and dignity than I possess. My nature is rather sarcastic, but I will guard against it. I ask pardon beforehand of Mr. Fowler and others."

Dr. Bunting seconded the vote of thanks to the retiring President, "for the manner in which he discharged his duties at the last Conference. Not that he and I always thought alike; but his urbanity and uniform kindness secured my approbation and admiration."

Dr. Beaumont: "I do think that Mr. Stanley's election gave general satisfaction to our people."

Mr. Stanley: "I regret the collision between myself and Dr. Bunting which has led to his limiting the vote of thanks to conduct in the Chair. But I found it impossible to supply the vacancies in Circuits from the list of reserve, and was told the work of God was suffering grievously by want of such supply. I was therefore obliged to call out from the Institution some of the third year men; but I promise that I will not do so any more."

A conversation followed on the question whether the exigencies of the work should be allowed to outweigh the

desirability of a complete curriculum at the Institution. The most telling speech was that of Dr. Beaumont. "No doubt the high-bred young creatures would be better for a perfect breaking in, but 'the Lord hath need of them; loose them and let them go.'"

The two first numbers of the *Fly Sheets* had been issued in the spring, and it was natural that some allusion should be made to them; but the situation and the character of the man whose authorship of the productions no one—who knew him and had read them—for a moment doubted, craved very wary walking. Unhappily, at the Conference of 1846 the subject was snatched up and tossed about in a way the most promiscuous, precipitated, and infelicitous. The first allusion to it was in this wise. Another of our fine young ministers had left our ministry, and obtained episcopal ordination and a living, but this ex-Methodist minister had also won a Church-wife. The question rose whether this case was to be classified along with that of the popular young man whose conduct had been so honestly condemned by Conference two years before. The notice of resignation was not forthcoming, so the facts of the case could only be arrived at by questioning those members of the Conference who were best acquainted with them. Now, as Mr. Fowler was for the second term stationed in the Circuit from which the young man originally came, and well knew his kith and kin, he not unnaturally took deep interest in the matter. Mr. Fowler therefore put some apposite inquiries on the subject. Thereupon Dr. Bunting "fell on" Mr. Fowler, connecting him directly with the production of the *Fly Sheets*. This was the first mention of them in the Conference. "This," says Fowler, "I repudiated." On asking what ground Dr. Bunting had for casting such an odious imputation on an honourable member of the Conference, the only answer he could get was:—

Dr. Bunting: "I do not like questions to be asked which disturb our people in some mysterious way."

Notwithstanding this indignant repudiation of the slightest complicity in, or connection with, or connivance at the dastardly *Fly Sheets*, Dr. Bunting returned to the charge with redoubled vehemence on a subsequent discussion. An official vacancy had taken place in a most important Connexional Department. The circumstances which had caused the vacancy were so unfortunate

as to render necessary the extremest caution in the next appointment. The committee had fixed upon a minister who seemed made to order for the post, and could scarcely be improved upon. But, unfortunately, there was a bar in his inextricable environment which rendered the appointment unadvisable and injudicious. The committee were clearly not aware of this.

Dr. Bunting moved the appointment of the nominee of the committee. J. Fowler moved as an amendment for a committee to reconsider the question, with additional data, and to see whether someone could not be appointed who was not so invaluable as a Superintendent. This Dr. Beaumont seconded, and Mr. Vevers supported. Dr. Bunting immediately replied: "Mr. Fowler has been fruitful in motions; but of this motion no notice has been given. We must not have the *Fly Sheets* echoed here."

He was too mixed up with the rest of the discussion to take full notes.

Dr. Bunting relapsed into his former offensive personalities and dark insinuations. He was heard with an ominous silence, without a cheer, except from Dr. Alder and one or two others. Mr. Reece seconded and Mr. Newton supported this resolution; but were not listened to at all, a general conversation going on all the time. Dr. Bunting's motion was carried, but not one-third of the Conference voted either way.

Dr. Bunting again alluded to the *Fly Sheets*, when his name occurred on the first reading of the stations. He said: "I wish to retire from the Presidency of the Institution. I am not up to the work. I have not read the *Fly Sheets*. I may do so, and, when I have read them, may speak about them. I tell those who, either directly or indirectly, encourage them, that it is producing a contrary effect to that which is intended. I will give place to you; but I will not give place to the devil. It stirs up in me the old man. I am in your hands."

Mr. Stanley: "I would not have Dr. Bunting to give up now because of anonymous papers which he has not thought it worth his while to read."

Dr. Bunting did not press his resignation; but he gave his judgment as to the past *Governorship* of the Institution. He said: "Mr. — has much adroitness; but if not at — he would be a supernumerary, or have an easy Circuit. Mr. Entwisle and Mr. Treffry did not answer as Governors. I am sorry that these discussions are now forced upon us."

Mr. T. Jackson: "Many motions have been made; is there to be no motion about the *Fly Sheets*?"

No answer was given to this inquiry. One cannot but regret that the *Fly Sheets* were taken up in this unprofitable and undignified manner, which proved little but the irritation and annoyance which their subtle and unshrinking author had succeeded in producing. The attempt to fasten a suspicion of

complicity in such a crime—as aiding and abetting in such a shameful, hateful way of carrying Church measures—upon a minister in high position, a member of the Legal Conference, whose name had been for a generation a synonym for honour and outspokenness, was, to use the term employed by all who spoke to Mr. Fowler on the subject, “indefensible.” There was no ground whatever for the dark insinuations cast upon him. The very fact which was put forth as such—Mr. Fowler’s fearless frankness in committee and in Conference—rendered all resort to anonymous carping and cavilling altogether needless, and the mere suspicion of it wanton and ridiculous. Mr. Fowler was every whit as innocent and as incapable of anonymous vituperation as was Dr. Bunting himself. To anyone who knew him well it was simply unimaginable, being alien from and antipodal to his habits and his nature. As to the resolution which drew down upon him Dr. Bunting’s fulminations, facts only too soon and too signally verified his forecasts. Within two years, the admirable minister appointed to the vacant office had, by no fault of his own, been obliged to resign an appointment which had proved unfortunate to everyone concerned, and most of all to the minister himself.

Mr. Fowler’s insight and sagacity had been shown by his opposition to the appointment of the foregoing occupant of that position, whose lamentable breakdown had rendered necessary this new election.

It seems impossible not to doubt the policy of this unreasonable effort to represent as a factious “echo of the *Fly Sheets*” an honest, open, and above-board exercise of the Conferential right of free inquiry and of frank discussion. One would have thought that at this moment everything would have been avoided which could give the slightest countenance or confirmation to the statements of the *Fly Sheets* in this respect.

Mr. Scott objected to a very promising candidate, that in his District sermon there was a want of evangelical sentiment.

A candidate who could not be admitted to the Institution by reason of a matrimonial engagement, was declined on that account.

Dr. Bunting, however, came to the rescue. “The lady is a daughter of a Methodist minister. I think we could take him. We should at least have an excellent Preacher’s wife.”

The Connexion got an excellent Preacher too. He still survives, after a long, honoured, useful course.

Dr. Bunting remarked, on the reading of the obituary of Mr. John Greaves: “When President for the first time, I received into full Connexion

a graduate of Cambridge, Mr. Galland, a student of an Independent College, Mr. Greaves, and a chimney-sweep."

Dr. Bunting objected to the "apologetic part" of the obituary of Joseph Taylor. "His abruptness was so very occasional as to form no feature of his character. He was not 'rude'; he made a good impression upon those that are without."

Mr. Dixon testified to his "Pastoral laboriousness, his sympathy with the poor, and his ministerial dignity in the management of meetings."

Dr. Beaumont objected to the phrase "itinerant Preacher" in a Conference document instead of "minister."

Dr. Bunting agreed with him.

Mr. Fowler objected to such phrases in a ministerial obituary as "his gestures were studied" and "the structure of his mind was bitinglly sarcastic."

On the request of Mr. Reece to be allowed to become a supernumerary after fifty-nine years of continuous itinerancy, Dr. Bunting dwelt upon the usefulness of supernumeraries, and said how honourable it was in him not to wish to complete his sixty years of active ministry.

Mr. Fowler had the misfortune to find himself once more opposed to Dr. Bunting's views. A prominent and popular minister had been found guilty by a Minor District Meeting of grievous immorality. They recommended his expulsion. Against this he had appealed. A committee was appointed to consider his appeal, and Dr. Bunting proposed that the President of the Conference should take the Chair of the committee. Mr. Fowler demurred to this on the ground of the delay and hindrance to the business of the Conference which resulted from the absence of the President even when on the Stationing Committee. He thought it inconvenient to transfer the President from the Chair of the Conference to that of an extemporised committee. With this feeling the Conference sympathised, although Dr. Bunting said: "I have been on such committees *scores* of times when President." Dr. Newton said the same. The President *took* the Chair of the committee.

The committee unanimously confirmed the finding and recommendation of the Minor District Meeting.

The ex-President: "I feel bound to move the adoption of the report."

J. Fowler: "I feel bound to second it. A most calamitous case."

Dr. Bunting: "I feel bound to express, deferentially and humbly, my own opinion, although it is almost presumptuous to express an opinion differing from such men. The business was most unfortunately introduced. All the men in London, young and old, were present. *After* this a Minor District Meeting came unfortunately into the business. I think no judge in the land would think the evidence sufficient. I think the sentence is of extreme

severity. There is certainly no mercy in it, and judges are bound to show mercy—and so you are *morally*. I cannot vote for the expulsion."

Dr. Alder moved "That he be suspended for a year, and, if a favourable report were given, readmitted."

Dr. Bunting seconded it, and Mr. W. M. Bunting supported it. Mr. Vevers, Mr. Lomas, and Dr. Newton supported the expulsion, holding that the charge was "proven." He was expelled.

The President: "The complaints are long and loud from Glasgow with regard to the Preachers persisting in wearing the gown. If so many great theologians and Preachers did without the gown, why should our societies and congregations be disturbed for the sake of having it on?"

Mr. Duncan informed the Conference that Mrs. Sutherland, a devoted Scotch lady, would settle £90 per annum on a minister stationed in Doune so long as the Conference would appoint one.

Dr. Bunting: "I am against locking up a man and locking up the Conference."

Dr. Beaumont: "Mrs. S. is an elect lady. I trust that no technical difficulty will deprive poor Scotch Methodism of such a serviceable sum."

Mr. Haswell took the same view.

Dr. Bunting: "We should not be bound to find a man for any place for ever. Dr. Beaumont's oratory is fanciful. If she finds the means, and the minister for Doune may be stationed at Stirling, that is another matter. I move for a committee to consider the case."

Mr. Scott wished the Conference would allow application to be made to our wealthy friends throughout the Connexion on behalf of a new chapel in the London District.

J. Fowler and Mr. West opposed this, on the ground that there were so many equally necessitous cases; that our liberal people were being harried with such applications, and the ministers diverted from their work by introducing the itinerant applicant to friends whom they were already pressing to their power for local and Connexional objects; that there ought to be some little breathing time after last year's application on behalf of Kingswood chapel, which had turned out to be a Circuit chapel not upon the ground; and that the conjoint enterprise for paying off existing chapel debts and building day schools free from debt would tax the resources of the Connexion to the utmost.

Dr. Bunting strongly advocated the measure. "Have we not deviated in other cases from our rule? Witness the *Kingswood juggle*."

Dr. Beaumont thought with Dr. Bunting.

Dr. Bunting moved: "That permission be given to the President to issue circulars applying to 200 persons, and raising £600. Of course, it is the duty of the Chapel Committee to look after the expenditure."

The motion was carried.

Dr. Bunting moved: "That the rule be rescinded which makes the President *ex-officio* the chairman of his District." He asked: "Is the Speaker of the House of Commons ever made chairman of a committee?"

J. Fowler: "A day or two ago Dr. Bunting proposed that the President should leave the Chair of Conference to take that of a committee."

Dr. Bunting: "I hope that the resolutions of the Education Committee will pass without much discussion. They have undergone investigation in

a large committee, and men of various politics are talking about education. We *must* have day schools. I thankfully admit that the practice of the British and Foreign schools is far better than their principles; but the Unitarians are making an attack on them. I would recommend an immediate application to Government before any emergency arise."

Mr. T. Jackson: "I second the resolution. I hope we shall make a practical application of our principles."

Dr. Bunting advocated the withdrawal of a minister for educational work. "After what is done at Sheffield and Taunton for the sake of our people who are able to take care of themselves, we cannot with decency refuse to do the same for our poor people, who have fifty times as many sons as those in Sheffield and Taunton."

Mr. Scott: "There is a limit to human strength. Unless the Conference relieve me from some of my responsibility, the tax upon my powers will be too great."

Dr. Beaumont: "Where is the necessity for the accumulation of so many offices on one individual? Mr. Scott has enough to do with the Third London Circuit on his hands and the treasurership of the Missions and the Auxiliary Funds. Let Mr. Lomas take the chairmanship of the Education Committee. Which of us knows more about education than he does? I move that Mr. Lomas take it."

Mr. Lomas: "I cannot consent to supersede Mr. Scott."

The motion was carried.

Dr. Bunting: "This appointment is but for a year; we hope in twelve months to find a suitable lay agent."

Mr. S. Jackson then proposed his great scheme for the training of our baptised children, with the object of making them sound and thorough and devoted Methodists. He concluded by saying: "This, the removal of our chapel debts, and systematic Pastoral visitation, will ensure us an increase of from ten to fifteen thousand a year."

Mr. Dixon: "We do not do our duty as a Church to our baptised children. We should attach them to genuine Methodism at an early period, so as not to incorporate persons with Methodism who are not really Methodists." Minutes in favour of the plan were read from the Newcastle, Hull, and other Districts.

Mr. Osborn proposed resolutions embodying the principles brought out in the discussion. They were unanimously passed.

The report of the Committee on Marriage Regulations was called for. It had never met.

Dr. Bunting: "Such service is imposed on the brethren in London as they can never discharge."

J. Fowler: "Dr. Bunting himself nominated the committee."

Mr. Osborn: "Some of these marriages are void *ab initio*." He was called to order.

The request of the Hull Methodists was presented that the Conference of 1847 should be held in that town. Under a gush of feeling excited by Dr. Bunting, the show of hands determined that the next Conference should not be held in Hull.

The President: "I regret that the Conference should be shut out from Hull."



Dr. Bunting : " We do not wish to be shut in anywhere."

The President called for Minutes of the Manchester and the Sheffield Districts on the case of Mr. Caughey. That from Sheffield "condemned unauthorised Preachers, preaching for hire."

Dr. Newton, as Chairman of the Manchester District : " For years Mr. Caughey has been preaching among us without having his name on the Minutes, and without authorised inquiry as to his character, belief, and teaching anywhere on the face of the earth. He is in a false position. I have heard attentive men say that he does not preach the Gospel. Acquainting himself beforehand with facts with regard to individuals in his congregation, he declares them from the pulpit as if they were learnt by supernatural intuition ; he says he has been on his knees for hours, and the Lord will not give him another text, when people in the congregation have been talking with him nearly all the time between the two services. He has many imitators. The Circuit ministers give way to pressure from without. He says that he has committed all crimes except murder. The amount of Sabbath travelling he occasions is very great. One inn has had as many as twenty conveyances bringing people to hear him. An extra Sunday train has been run for the purpose. The increase ; where is it ? The two Districts where he had his first success soon dwindled down. Ministers in the same Circuit are differing about him. The conclusion arrived at by many is that they must have some other agency than the regular ministry, something extraneous to Wesleyan Methodism."

Mr. West : " We must be careful not to injure the spirit of religion, or let down ministerial dignity."

Mr. Vevers : " I speak to a constitutional question. If any Superintendent may admit an unaccredited man into a Methodist pulpit for an indefinite length of time, every Superintendent may have Socinianism preached to our people. Our intelligent friends deny the legality of Mr. Caughey's preaching in a Methodist chapel."

Mr. Naylor : " The brethren who have invited Mr. Caughey during the last year have violated the understanding if not the rule of Conference. Mr. Caughey's letter to the Conference is most insulting."

Mr. Bell : " In introducing Mr. Caughey into Birmingham I did not act on my own authority ; and his visit has been a blessing. A more heavenly-minded man I never heard. Such an influence from above I have scarcely ever felt. I do not justify all his doing. We all aim right. I am glad that we have Vevers and Fowler among us, but we must all be one or the other."

The President : " Mr. Bell says he acted in concert with his brethren in Birmingham. We should like to hear them."

Mr. J. Burton : " My excellent friend Mr. Bell stretched a point in giving that impression. Fidelity compels me to say that his statement is overwrought. I do not question Mr. Caughey's motives ; but I believe his conduct to be fraught with peril to our Connexion, if not even ruinous. The time has come when Conference must legislate on this question. I do not know what Dr. Bunting means to do."

Mr. G. Turner : " I found a great feeling in Birmingham in favour of Mr. Caughey. I thought that, of two evils, it was better that he should come. I cannot deny many instances of conversion. But if the same confidence had

to act upon the sympathies and sensibilities of massed humanity, were sure to bring the work of an evangelist into grievous disrepute.

Hence some natures were just as much repelled by his ministrations as others were attracted by them. I heard a distinguished man state to a large gathering of ministers of all denominations and theologic schools, that although he was brought up a Methodist, yet he traced his first estrangement from evangelic Christianity to the revulsion of his intelligence and sensibilities from the sermons and the services of Mr. Caughey. The abiding lesson of Mr. Caughey's work in England is that, like many other good and powerful agents, such as fire and water, *revivalistic specialism is a good servant but a bad master*. The bitter partisanship which his visits caused in some of our societies was terrible. Dr. Newton told me that even in the Warrenite dissensions he had not experienced such unpopularity, such odium, and such vituperation as he had to face from Mr. Caughey's partisans.

A letter was read from the *Temperance Convention*.

Dr. Beaumont said: "I should be sorry if the impression were produced that we are hostile to this movement. The public must be made to see that, whatever we may think of teetotalism, we are the friends of *Temperance*. We must guard and not endamage our own reputation in this. I move that a respectful answer be returned."

Dr. Bunting: "I would not have so mixed an assembly as the Temperance Convention meddle with the Churches. Let us agree to avoid all intemperate language, and let them do so too."

It was agreed that a respectful answer should be given. A letter to the New Connexion reciprocating the fraternal sentiments expressed by them was read by Dr. Hannah and adopted by the Conference.

Mr. Vevers asked for the Minute of the Missionary Committee defining the duties of the lay agent recently appointed. No such Minute could be found. A discussion then ensued as to the power of the Secretaries to send him into Circuits whether the Superintendent might think fit or not.

Dr. Beaumont complained that the answer to the Irish Address was made unreasonably long by meddling with matters in the uncertain future.

Dr. Bunting: "The Address must be a letter in answer to a letter. We must protest against error as well as declare truth. Some parts of the Address want a little careful consideration." Referred to a small committee.

Dr. Hannah read the report on Scotch affairs. It recommended that bands should be used, but that in some chapels in Glasgow the gown should be laid aside.

Mr. Duncan: "Gown and bands are a badge of ministerial authority. I never saw bands without gown."

Dr. Beaumont and Mr. Haswell opposed both.

Dr. Bunting: "Dr. Chalmers said, 'If a Scotchman has two thoughts

in his head, they won't lie quietly together, but will quarrel.' In Scotland they differ about little things."

Dr. Bunting and Mr. Osborn moved and seconded the order of the day as an amendment on the motion for receiving the report. The amendment was carried.

Mr. Thornton read the Pastoral Address.

Dr. Bunting greatly eulogised it, saying: "This is the happiest half-hour I have passed this Conference."

Mr. S. D. Waddy: "Each Pastoral Address should be presented to every member, and then all collected in a volume. It would attach our people to us."

Mr. Vevers complained that in the list of missionary deputations there was a great deal of monopoly and exclusion. "I would suggest that some others be associated with the secretaries in drawing it up."

Dr. Alder: "We shall be glad to have assistance."

J. Fowler called attention to the importance of systematic Pastoral visitation, there being such a small increase, after last year's decrease, and in Ireland a decrease.

Mr. Rigg: "I at first practised this as a duty; it has now become a pleasure."

Mr. A. E. Farrar: "I am sorry at the vote about Mr. Caughey, but we must supersede intrusive services by special revival services of our own."

Dr. Bunting: "I think it disorderly to refer to Mr. Caughey's services in this connection." He then read Wesley's directions to Adam Clarke in 1790, in Dublin, written from the city where they were now assembled. These are most wise. "You will have need of all the courage and prudence which God has given you. Very gently and very steadily you should proceed between the rocks on either hand. In the great revival at London my first difficulty was to bring in temper those who opposed the work," etc. (*Works*, vol. xiii., p. 104.)

"I think it impossible in our extended Connexion to see one by one, but we might get into families. In the present state of things I would not publish any details of our defects. In some things I think it better than in Wesley's days. We have better soil to work upon. We must not give advantage to our enemies, but do something that will turn to some advantage. We must not use our weapons slashingly. Loss of numbers, or smallness of increase, is not to be cured by *making* revivals. I am no anti-revivalist. I belonged to a school of revivalists in Manchester; not a good one, but good in its design. But we want old-fashioned prayer-meetings. I think we have too much of elaborate preaching, though I honour the men who are capable of it. I have only heard two sermons for many years by which I have not been pleased and profited. We should not aim at being *great* preachers. I hope young men will be careful against ambitious preaching."

Dr. Beaumont: "What we ought to pray for is a baptism of the Spirit. I concur with Dr. Bunting as to plain preaching. The country needs it. We must have preaching which acts upon the heart and wakes up the conscience. Our public services are not what they ought to be. After the reading of the Word of God, a parcel of singers get up and sing all sorts of things. As a minister of Christianity, I denounce this practice." (Here someone interrupted.) "I declare it is my intention to speak my mind. The announcement of the numbers this year and last is a startling thing. I have

no wish to force my sentiments against the current feeling of this body; but I felt it my duty to enumerate these facts, and to move a resolution to the effect: 'That the Conference expresses its humiliation before God, and its desire to amend.'"

J. Fowler: "A very good resolution."

Mr. Osborn: "I concur in much that has been said; but we must guard against exciting expectations which will not be realised. It is impossible that we can spend an hour a day on each of our members. I would have something done at District Meetings. There is great laxity in the administration of the Lord's Supper."

Dr. Bunting moved for a committee and the brethren who had spoken communicating their views.

It was stated that £12,000 would be immediately required for the transference of Kingswood school to Bath.

J. Fowler: "How is this sum to be raised?"

Mr. Prest: "A fair question. If we would settle it, we must consult our laymen."

Mr. Scott: "The laymen on the committee should be more numerous than ourselves."

Dr. Bunting: "I would not have done this for old Kingswood, but a new situation is different. Who is to raise the money? On what principle of righteousness can we ask our people to raise this money and to have no voice as to how it shall be raised? We must guard against claiming too much. When our ecclesiastical privileges are not involved, why contend? It is not a Christian principle to *stand upon our rights and be negligent about our duties. Our duties are above our rights.* This will be seen at a later day as a matter of policy and necessity, as well as of righteousness, brethren, man and man."

Dr. Beaumont: "Many men who have been educated at Kingswood are now exercising a beneficent influence in the country. But the hand of time has touched it." The motion for change of site was carried unanimously.

Dr. Bunting: "It must be distinctly understood that the selection of a site is an after question." (Agreed.)

Some resolutions were read about chapel affairs, and a general proposition adopted for architects of five different plans and scales of building—to seat 250, 500, 1,000, 1,500, 2,000.

Mr. West: "We are building on an average eighty chapels a year."

A letter was read from an architect offering his gratuitous services as adviser on chapel-building business.

Dr. Bunting: "We will not have a Conference tailor, nor a Conference pill-maker, nor even a Conference architect." A committee was appointed. The question of *Insurance* was brought up, and Sir W. Atherton's opinion read. Mr. West explained the proposal and suggested Circuit Committees for local oversight.

Dr. Bunting moved a resolution expressive of sympathy with the object of the Evangelical Alliance, and wishing it success, adding: "My friend, Dr. Beaumont, has seen the resolution and approves of it."

Dr. Beaumont seconded the resolution, and hoped that next Sabbath would be observed as a day of special prayer for its success.

Dr. Bunting advised that more particular attention be paid to the

conversions which take place in our chapels, and that a column in the Circuit schedule be provided for that purpose, filled up, and examined at the District Meeting.

Mr. Scott: "From twenty to thirty day schools are waiting to be settled on the model deed."

Mr. Newstead moved and Dr. Newton seconded a motion to be inserted in the Minutes, inculcating a more strict observance of the Sabbath.

Dr. Cook: "Methodism on the Continent is making a stand which no other Church is making, and in this respect, and defence of the supreme authority of the Scriptures, is the vanguard of the Lord's host."

J. Fowler noticed the importance of some record of "dropped-out resolutions," and particularly of preserving the Minutes of District Meetings.

The first question as to watering-places now appears. The Leeds chairman and the Knaresborough Superintendent were directed to make a plan for the supply of Harrogate, during the season, by ministers in search of health. The Edinburgh ministers were required to resume the afternoon service in our chapel.

After signing the Journal the President made a short speech: "I feel dissatisfied with myself, but delighted with the Conference. One good thing, I think, we have enjoyed this Conference—the right of grumbling freely more than formerly. I regard our present peace and unity as an earnest of good days."

The Conference of 1846 was in some respects a disappointing one. The stalwart President, after forty-nine years of arduous itinerancy, was past the stage of energetic equability, and had become spasmodic, snatchy, and at times snaggy in his strength. Hence he surprised his brethren by a rasping repressiveness. Yet the right of grumbling freely had been greater than before. But Dr. Beaumont complained—I think justly—that there was too great restriction on freedom of speech. The President *put him down* very unceremoniously, and something more.

#### LIVERPOOL CONFERENCE, 1847.

The One Hundred and Fourth Conference was held in Liverpool, under the Presidency of the Rev. Samuel Jackson. Like his two nearest predecessors, he belonged to "the other side" of the house, as he said in his opening speech: "I have one qualification for this office: I am an independent, unpledged man; I fear no man's frown, and I count no man's favour."

Dr. Bunting once more made a deliverance with regard to the right of voting.

He said: "This right of voting is a *trust*. We are not at liberty to vote as we please; we are not to look at absolute right. A man may wear a fool's cap, but not in the Conference. I do not know how men can be canvassing; look at the New Testament: 'In honour, preferring one another.'"

Dr. Beaumont: "Dr. Bunting's remark assails the Deed. Those who can vote have an 'absolute right to vote as they themselves think best.'"

Mr. Vevers: "I shall vote without party feeling, but I will not be dictated to." Mr. West supported the remarks of Mr. Vevers.

Dr. Bunting: "I shall vote for Mr. Crowther, the man who appears likely to have the majority." Nevertheless Mr. R. Young, nominated by Dr. Newton, had the first vote, Mr. Crowther the second. Dr. Bunting objected to the election by seniority being taken from only one year. "I give notice of motion for a declaration, not an enactment, that we should have more than one or two years to select from."

Dr. Beaumont: "I object to that departure from our rule and practice." Dr. Beaumont nominated Samuel Dunn, who received eighteen votes.

The vote for Mr. S. Jackson as President was 174 out of 252 votes cast.

The President said: "I hope that as my fathers and brethren have placed me here I may have your prayers and help. I see a large element of kindness in this vote. I agree with those who think that I am not the fittest man for the place. I have been told that if I had anything to do with the *Fly Sheets* I am not fit for the Chair. I have had nothing to do with them; this is not the first time that treachery has found a place within the Christian ministry. Judas was 'one of the Twelve.' I know nothing about the *Fly Sheets*. I cannot sympathise with such a state of mind; it would exclude me from the favour of God. I shall secure freedom of speech to all impartially; none shall say he has not had an opportunity of speaking. But even this must have limits. Our Methodist doctrines and principles we are sworn to maintain at any expense, even at the cost of being taunted with infringing liberties. Liberty of speech must also be limited by the limit of our time of sitting; the more important matters must not be injured by the time consumed on smaller ones. There is another most important limit. We must not say here what we should not like to see or hear elsewhere; whether we will or not, what is said here does get abroad. I admire Dr. Bunting's oratory—if he stands by his brethren, his brethren will stand by him. If he forsakes us, we must take care of ourselves. I am impressed by the importance of my position. I may possibly be asked a question which I cannot promptly answer; my mind is slow in operation. If a question be critical, I must take time before I answer."

This speech was as characteristic of the man as is his admirable portrait in "Wesley and his Successors." Sturdy, self-contained, straight-sighted, keen-sighted and far-sighted, gruff and reticent; with unbrushed hair, massive head, and strong-featured countenance. He was one of our strongest, clearest thinkers; during his Presidential year he published

a very able and most timely treatise, entitled "The Methodist People ; their great Power and their true Policy." It is not included in Dr. Osborn's list of his publications.

Dr. Bunting : " The President is mistaken in supposing that those who have not voted for him had not confidence in him. I did think it right not to vote for any member of the faction." (Signs of disapproval.) " I will take up my sword under Mr. Jackson's captaincy."

Dr. Beaumont warmly supported the vote of thanks to the ex-President, but said : " There are two points about which I feel dissatisfied." Dr. Beaumont was repeatedly interrupted, but not by the Chair. He complained of the interruptions, but just repeated his objection——

" I have quite as high an opinion of Mr. Atherton as those young brethren who interrupted me." He expressed his disappointment at Mr. Atherton's restrictions on freedom of speech and his mode of treating Mr. ——.

The ex-President : " I have known Dr. Beaumont for fifty years. He is a perfect gentleman in private life, but he shows to disadvantage in public. The lamb becomes the lion, and shakes his mane."

Mr. Fowler gave notice of a motion respecting the law as to proportioning the number of ministers to the number of members.

Mr. Vevers moved for a regular report of the proceedings of Conference. He repudiated the *Fly Sheets*, and complained that he should ever have been imagined to have anything to do with them.

Mr. Stanley : " I think myself very much maligned in being commended by the *Fly Sheets*."

Mr. Fowler complained of certain insinuations that had been repeated this Conference, although refuted last Conference, and of members of the Legal Conference being branded as " the faction."

Dr. Bunting, in a very sensitive manner, complained of this speech as a " personal attack."

Mr. Osborn : " We should have men excluded from the Body who have acted thus basely. I have never shaken hands with the reputed author of the *Takings*, and I never will until he has cleared himself. I would have declarations sent to every preacher, to be signed by him."

Some other speakers followed, and much disorder prevailed.

Messrs. Osborn, Vevers, and W. B. Stephenson were appointed to draw up a *Declaration*.

On the next day Mr. Vevers moved, and Mr. Osborn seconded, a resolution of condemnation of the *Fly Sheets* and of sympathy with the leading brethren, especially Drs. Bunting and Newton, and that the resolution be introduced into the Journal.

Dr. Osborn : " I am sorry that Dr. Beaumont was so much interrupted. My object is a religious one. The question is: *First*, Are not these anonymous publications? *Second*, Is not their spirit bad, and such as the Lord hates? The law of Christ commands me to judge in charity, and says that the younger are to be subject to the elder, and that they that rule well are worthy of double honour. No man appreciates certain qualities in Dr. Beaumont more than I do. I read in the *Fly Sheets* that Dr. Bunting acts as if he wished to be put in the first place. Does Dr. Beaumont believe this? I say it is a lie. Slander is as great a crime as drunkenness."

severity. There is certainly no mercy in it, and judges are bound to show mercy—and so *you* are *morally*. I cannot vote for the expulsion."

Dr. Alder moved "That he be suspended for a year, and, if a favourable report were given, readmitted."

Dr. Bunting seconded it, and Mr. W. M. Bunting supported it. Mr. Vevers, Mr. Lomas, and Dr. Newton supported the expulsion, holding that the charge was "proven." He was expelled.

The President: "The complaints are long and loud from Glasgow with regard to the Preachers persisting in wearing the gown. If so many great theologians and Preachers did without the gown, why should our societies and congregations be disturbed for the sake of having it on?"

Mr. Duncan informed the Conference that Mrs. Sutherland, a devoted Scotch lady, would settle £90 per annum on a minister stationed in Doune so long as the Conference would appoint one.

Dr. Bunting: "I am against locking up a man and locking up the Conference."

Dr. Beaumont: "Mrs. S. is an elect lady. I trust that no technical difficulty will deprive poor Scotch Methodism of such a serviceable sum."

Mr. Haswell took the same view.

Dr. Bunting: "We should not be bound to find a man for any place for ever. Dr. Beaumont's oratory is fanciful. If she finds the means, and the minister for Doune may be stationed at Stirling, that is another matter. I move for a committee to consider the case."

Mr. Scott wished the Conference would allow application to be made to our wealthy friends throughout the Connexion on behalf of a new chapel in the London District.

J. Fowler and Mr. West opposed this, on the ground that there were so many equally necessitous cases; that our liberal people were being harried with such applications, and the ministers diverted from their work by introducing the itinerant applicant to friends whom they were already pressing to their power for local and Connexional objects; that there ought to be some little breathing time after last year's application on behalf of Kingswood chapel, which had turned out to be a Circuit chapel not upon the ground; and that the conjoint enterprise for paying off existing chapel debts and building day schools free from debt would tax the resources of the Connexion to the utmost.

Dr. Bunting strongly advocated the measure. "Have we not deviated in other cases from our rule? Witness the *Kingswood juggle*."

Dr. Beaumont thought with Dr. Bunting.

Dr. Bunting moved: "That permission be given to the President to issue circulars applying to 200 persons, and raising £600. Of course, it is the duty of the Chapel Committee to look after the expenditure."

The motion was carried.

Dr. Bunting moved: "That the rule be rescinded which makes the President *ex-officio* the chairman of his District." He asked: "Is the Speaker of the House of Commons ever made chairman of a committee?"

J. Fowler: "A day or two ago Dr. Bunting proposed that the President should leave the Chair of Conference to take that of a committee."

Dr. Bunting: "I hope that the resolutions of the Education Committee will pass without much discussion. They have undergone investigation in



a large committee, and men of various politics are talking about education. We *must* have day schools. I thankfully admit that the practice of the British and Foreign schools is far better than their principles; but the Unitarians are making an attack on them. I would recommend an immediate application to Government before any emergency arise."

Mr. T. Jackson: "I second the resolution. I hope we shall make a practical application of our principles."

Dr. Bunting advocated the withdrawal of a minister for educational work. "After what is done at Sheffield and Taunton for the sake of our people who are able to take care of themselves, we cannot with decency refuse to do the same for our poor people, who have fifty times as many sons as those in Sheffield and Taunton."

Mr. Scott: "There is a limit to human strength. Unless the Conference relieve me from some of my responsibility, the tax upon my powers will be too great."

Dr. Beaumont: "Where is the necessity for the accumulation of so many offices on one individual? Mr. Scott has enough to do with the Third London Circuit on his hands and the treasurership of the Missions and the Auxiliary Funds. Let Mr. Lomas take the chairmanship of the Education Committee. Which of us knows more about education than he does? I move that Mr. Lomas take it."

Mr. Lomas: "I cannot consent to supersede Mr. Scott."

The motion was carried.

Dr. Bunting: "This appointment is but for a year; we hope in twelve months to find a suitable lay agent."

Mr. S. Jackson then proposed his great scheme for the training of our baptised children, with the object of making them sound and thorough and devoted Methodists. He concluded by saying: "This, the removal of our chapel debts, and systematic Pastoral visitation, will ensure us an increase of from ten to fifteen thousand a year."

Mr. Dixon: "We do not do our duty as a Church to our baptised children. We should attach them to genuine Methodism at an early period, so as not to incorporate persons with Methodism who are not really Methodists." Minutes in favour of the plan were read from the Newcastle, Hull, and other Districts.

Mr. Osborn proposed resolutions embodying the principles brought out in the discussion. They were unanimously passed.

The report of the Committee on Marriage Regulations was called for. It had never met.

Dr. Bunting: "Such service is imposed on the brethren in London as they can never discharge."

J. Fowler: "Dr. Bunting himself nominated the committee."

Mr. Osborn: "Some of these marriages are void *ab initio*." He was called to order.

The request of the Hull Methodists was presented that the Conference of 1847 should be held in that town. Under a gush of feeling excited by Dr. Bunting, the show of hands determined that the next Conference should not be held in Hull.

The President: "I regret that the Conference should be shut out from Hull."

Dr. Bunting : " We do not wish to be shut in anywhere."

The President called for Minutes of the Manchester and the Sheffield Districts on the case of Mr. Caughey. That from Sheffield " condemned unauthorised Preachers, preaching for hire."

Dr. Newton, as Chairman of the Manchester District : " For years Mr. Caughey has been preaching among us without having his name on the Minutes, and without authorised inquiry as to his character, belief, and teaching anywhere on the face of the earth. He is in a false position. I have heard attentive men say that he does not preach the Gospel. Acquainting himself beforehand with facts with regard to individuals in his congregation, he declares them from the pulpit as if they were learnt by supernatural intuition ; he says he has been on his knees for hours, and the Lord will not give him another text, when people in the congregation have been talking with him nearly all the time between the two services. He has many imitators. The Circuit ministers give way to pressure from without. He says that he has committed all crimes except murder. The amount of Sabbath travelling he occasions is very great. One inn has had as many as twenty conveyances bringing people to hear him. An extra Sunday train has been run for the purpose. The increase ; where is it ? The two Districts where he had his first success soon dwindled down. Ministers in the same Circuit are differing about him. The conclusion arrived at by many is that they must have some other agency than the regular ministry, something extraneous to Wesleyan Methodism."

Mr. West : " We must be careful not to injure the spirit of religion, or let down ministerial dignity."

Mr. Vevers : " I speak to a constitutional question. If any Superintendent may admit an unaccredited man into a Methodist pulpit for an indefinite length of time, every Superintendent may have Socinianism preached to our people. Our intelligent friends deny the legality of Mr. Caughey's preaching in a Methodist chapel."

Mr. Naylor : " The brethren who have invited Mr. Caughey during the last year have violated the understanding if not the rule of Conference. Mr. Caughey's letter to the Conference is most insulting."

Mr. Bell : " In introducing Mr. Caughey into Birmingham I did not act on my own authority ; and his visit has been a blessing. A more heavenly-minded man I never heard. Such an influence from above I have scarcely ever felt. I do not justify all his doing. We all aim right. I am glad that we have Vevers and Fowler among us, but we must all be one or the other."

The President : " Mr. Bell says he acted in concert with his brethren in Birmingham. We should like to hear them."

Mr. J. Burton : " My excellent friend Mr. Bell stretched a point in giving that impression. Fidelity compels me to say that his statement is overwrought. I do not question Mr. Caughey's motives ; but I believe his conduct to be fraught with peril to our Connexion, if not even ruinous. The time has come when Conference must legislate on this question. I do not know what Dr. Bunting means to do."

Mr. G. Turner : " I found a great feeling in Birmingham in favour of Mr. Caughey. I thought that, of two evils, it was better that he should come. I cannot deny many instances of conversion. But if the same confidence had

been placed in the regular ministers, and could have been secured, the good would have been as great, and the evil less. My opinion lies between that of Mr. Bell and that of Mr. Burton."

Dr. Bunting : " I wish to avoid a painful discussion. I am afraid lest any impression should get abroad that we are against revivals of religion. We need one. Much may be said on both sides. I would go to higher grounds. One thing is clear : Mr. Caughey's visits do occasion differences. God does go out of His ordinary way, but never out of His own way—the ministry of the Word. One reason of our present small increase may be that little good is effected because nothing is expected till Mr. Caughey comes. I would propose that a letter be sent to the American Bishops requesting that they would recall Mr. Caughey, whose visit has been so unusually protracted in this country, where he is under no authority. This will be the most delicate way of interfering."

Mr. S. D. Waddy : " I think we owe something to the many who have been brought in by his instrumentality. They have been too short a time in connection with us not to be injured by the peremptory request of the Conference. I wish he could be fixed somewhere under regulation."

Mr. Scott : " I think it time to step in and put a stop to these irregularities."

Mr. E. Walker : " I think a direct communication with Mr. Caughey preferable."

Mr. A. E. Farrar : " I think if Conference were to state to him the danger, he would leave."

Amidst much clamour, many objecting to the resolution, the President put it ; it was carried.

Next morning, on the reading of the record, Dr. Beaumont strove to reopen the discussion, but Mr. S. D. Waddy said : " Though I did not concur in the vote, I think matters must not be reopened."

Mr. A. E. Farrar : " I wish to know what is understood by the decision so long as Mr. Caughey is in England ?"

Dr. Bunting : " I hope that all the brethren now understand the matter." No answer was forthcoming.

It must be seen that Mr. Caughey was a rather puzzling phenomenon so long as he flared comet-like in the firmament of Methodism, "with fear of change perplexing" Circuits. Yet the mystery is not incapable of a simple and a safe solution, and the lessons to be learnt from his career lie very near the surface. He proved a moving focus of contention, the centre of a Church cyclone, because he was himself made up of incompatibilities and contrarieties. He united in the same person the revivalist and the pretender. He brought to decision hundreds of hesitating, halting hearers by an urgency and fervour well befitting to his message ; he shocked and repelled others by preternatural pretensions to which he had no claim, and by an elaborate unreality in seeming and in scheming which, though calculated

to act upon the sympathies and sensibilities of massed humanity, were sure to bring the work of an evangelist into grievous disrepute.

Hence some natures were just as much repelled by his ministrations as others were attracted by them. I heard a distinguished man state to a large gathering of ministers of all denominations and theologic schools, that although he was brought up a Methodist, yet he traced his first estrangement from evangelic Christianity to the revulsion of his intelligence and sensibilities from the sermons and the services of Mr. Caughey. The abiding lesson of Mr. Caughey's work in England is that, like many other good and powerful agents, such as fire and water, *revivalistic specialism is a good servant but a bad master*. The bitter partisanship which his visits caused in some of our societies was terrible. Dr. Newton told me that even in the Warrenite dissensions he had not experienced such unpopularity, such odium, and such vituperation as he had to face from Mr. Caughey's partisans.

A letter was read from the *Temperance Convention*.

Dr. Beaumont said: "I should be sorry if the impression were produced that we are hostile to this movement. The public must be made to see that, whatever we may think of teetotalism, we are the friends of *Temperance*. We must guard and not endamage our own reputation in this. I move that a respectful answer be returned."

Dr. Bunting: "I would not have so mixed an assembly as the Temperance Convention meddle with the Churches. Let us agree to avoid all intemperate language, and let them do so too."

It was agreed that a respectful answer should be given. A letter to the New Connexion reciprocating the fraternal sentiments expressed by them was read by Dr. Hannah and adopted by the Conference.

Mr. Vevers asked for the Minute of the Missionary Committee defining the duties of the lay agent recently appointed. No such Minute could be found. A discussion then ensued as to the power of the Secretaries to send him into Circuits whether the Superintendent might think fit or not.

Dr. Beaumont complained that the answer to the Irish Address was made unreasonably long by meddling with matters in the uncertain future.

Dr. Bunting: "The Address must be a letter in answer to a letter. We must protest against error as well as declare truth. Some parts of the Address want a little careful consideration." Referred to a small committee.

Dr. Hannah read the report on Scotch affairs. It recommended that bands should be used, but that in some chapels in Glasgow the gown should be laid aside.

Mr. Duncan: "Gown and bands are a badge of ministerial authority. I never saw bands without gown."

Dr. Beaumont and Mr. Haswell opposed both.

Dr. Bunting: "Dr. Chalmers said, 'If a Scotchman has two thoughts

in his head, they won't lie quietly together, but will quarrel.' In Scotland they differ about little things."

Dr. Bunting and Mr. Osborn moved and seconded the order of the day as an amendment on the motion for receiving the report. The amendment was carried.

Mr. Thornton read the Pastoral Address.

Dr. Bunting greatly eulogised it, saying: "This is the happiest half-hour I have passed this Conference."

Mr. S. D. Waddy: "Each Pastoral Address should be presented to every member, and then all collected in a volume. It would attach our people to us."

Mr. Vevers complained that in the list of missionary deputations there was a great deal of monopoly and exclusion. "I would suggest that some others be associated with the secretaries in drawing it up."

Dr. Alder: "We shall be glad to have assistance."

J. Fowler called attention to the importance of systematic Pastoral visitation, there being such a small increase, after last year's decrease, and in Ireland a decrease.

Mr. Rigg: "I at first practised this as a duty; it has now become a pleasure."

Mr. A. E. Farrar: "I am sorry at the vote about Mr. Caughey, but we must supersede intrusive services by special revival services of our own."

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A letter was read from an architect offering his gratuitous services as adviser on chapel-building business.

Dr. Bunting: "We will not have a Conference tailor, nor a Conference pill-maker, nor even a Conference architect." A committee was appointed. The question of *Insurance* was brought up, and Sir W. Atherton's opinion read. Mr. West explained the proposal and suggested Circuit Committees for local oversight.

Dr. Bunting moved a resolution expressive of sympathy with the object of the Evangelical Alliance, and wishing it success, adding: "My friend, Dr. Beaumont, has seen the resolution and approves of it."

Dr. Beaumont seconded the resolution, and hoped that next Sabbath would be observed as a day of special prayer for its success.

Dr. Bunting advised that more particular attention be paid to the

conversions which take place in our chapels, and that a column in the Circuit schedule be provided for that purpose, filled up, and examined at the District Meeting.

Mr. Scott : " From twenty to thirty day schools are waiting to be settled on the model deed."

Mr. Newstead moved and Dr. Newton seconded a motion to be inserted in the Minutes, inculcating a more strict observance of the Sabbath.

Dr. Cook : " Methodism on the Continent is making a stand which no other Church is making, and in this respect, and defence of the supreme authority of the Scriptures, is the vanguard of the Lord's host."

J. Fowler noticed the importance of some record of " dropped-out resolutions," and particularly of preserving the Minutes of District Meetings.

The first question as to watering-places now appears. The Leeds chairman and the Knaresborough Superintendent were directed to make a plan for the supply of Harrogate, during the season, by ministers in search of health. The Edinburgh ministers were required to resume the afternoon service in our chapel.

After signing the Journal the President made a short speech : " I feel dissatisfied with myself, but delighted with the Conference. One good thing, I think, we have enjoyed this Conference—the right of grumbling freely more than formerly. I regard our present peace and unity as an earnest of good days."

The Conference of 1846 was in some respects a disappointing one. The stalwart President, after forty-nine years of arduous itinerancy, was past the stage of energetic equability, and had become spasmodic, snatchy, and at times snaggy in his strength. Hence he surprised his brethren by a rasping repressiveness. Yet the right of grumbling freely had been greater than before. But Dr. Beaumont complained—I think justly—that there was too great restriction on freedom of speech. The President *put him down* very unceremoniously, and something more.

#### LIVERPOOL CONFERENCE, 1847.

The One Hundred and Fourth Conference was held in Liverpool, under the Presidency of the Rev. Samuel Jackson. Like his two nearest predecessors, he belonged to " the other side " of the house, as he said in his opening speech : " I have one qualification for this office : I am an independent, unpledged man ; I fear no man's frown, and I count no man's favour."

Dr. Bunting once more made a deliverance with regard to the right of voting.

He said: "This right of voting is a *trust*. We are not at liberty to vote as we please; we are not to look at absolute right. A man may wear a fool's cap, but not in the Conference. I do not know how men can be canvassing; look at the New Testament: 'In honour, preferring one another.'"

Dr. Beaumont: "Dr. Bunting's remark assails the Deed. Those who can vote have an 'absolute right to vote as they themselves think best.'"

Mr. Vevers: "I shall vote without party feeling, but I will not be dictated to." Mr. West supported the remarks of Mr. Vevers.

Dr. Bunting: "I shall vote for Mr. Crowther, the man who appears likely to have the majority." Nevertheless Mr. R. Young, nominated by Dr. Newton, had the first vote, Mr. Crowther the second. Dr. Bunting objected to the election by seniority being taken from only one year. "I give notice of motion for a declaration, not an enactment, that we should have more than one or two years to select from."

Dr. Beaumont: "I object to that departure from our rule and practice." Dr. Beaumont nominated Samuel Dunn, who received eighteen votes.

The vote for Mr. S. Jackson as President was 174 out of 252 votes cast.

The President said: "I hope that as my fathers and brethren have placed me here I may have your prayers and help. I see a large element of kindness in this vote. I agree with those who think that I am not the fittest man for the place. I have been told that if I had anything to do with the *Fly Sheets* I am not fit for the Chair. I have had nothing to do with them; this is not the first time that treachery has found a place within the Christian ministry. Judas was 'one of the Twelve.' I know nothing about the *Fly Sheets*. I cannot sympathise with such a state of mind; it would exclude me from the favour of God. I shall secure freedom of speech to all impartially; none shall say he has not had an opportunity of speaking. But even this must have limits. Our Methodist doctrines and principles we are sworn to maintain at any expense, even at the cost of being taunted with infringing liberties. Liberty of speech must also be limited by the limit of our time of sitting; the more important matters must not be injured by the time consumed on smaller ones. There is another most important limit. We must not say here what we should not like to see or hear elsewhere; whether we will or not, what is said here does get abroad. I admire Dr. Bunting's oratory—if he stands by his brethren, his brethren will stand by him. If he forsakes us, we must take care of ourselves. I am impressed by the importance of my position. I may possibly be asked a question which I cannot promptly answer; my mind is slow in operation. If a question be critical, I must take time before I answer."

This speech was as characteristic of the man as is his admirable portrait in "Wesley and his Successors." Sturdy, self-contained, straight-sighted, keen-sighted and far-sighted, gruff and reticent; with unbrushed hair, massive head, and strong-featured countenance. He was one of our strongest, clearest thinkers; during his Presidential year he published



a very able and most timely treatise, entitled "The Methodist People; their great Power and their true Policy." It is not included in Dr. Osborn's list of his publications.

Dr. Bunting: "The President is mistaken in supposing that those who have not voted for him had not confidence in him. I did think it right not to vote for any member of the faction." (Signs of disapproval.) "I will take up my sword under Mr. Jackson's captaincy."

Dr. Beaumont warmly supported the vote of thanks to the ex-President, but said: "There are two points about which I feel dissatisfied." Dr. Beaumont was repeatedly interrupted, but not by the Chair. He complained of the interruptions, but just repeated his objection—

"I have quite as high an opinion of Mr. Atherton as those young brethren who interrupted me." He expressed his disappointment at Mr. Atherton's restrictions on freedom of speech and his mode of treating Mr. —.

The ex-President: "I have known Dr. Beaumont for fifty years. He is a perfect gentleman in private life, but he shows to disadvantage in public. The lamb becomes the lion, and shakes his mane."

Mr. Fowler gave notice of a motion respecting the law as to proportioning the number of ministers to the number of members.

Mr. Vevers moved for a regular report of the proceedings of Conference. He repudiated the *Fly Sheets*, and complained that he should ever have been imagined to have anything to do with them.

Mr. Stanley: "I think myself very much maligned in being commended by the *Fly Sheets*."

Mr. Fowler complained of certain insinuations that had been repeated this Conference, although refuted last Conference, and of members of the Legal Conference being branded as "the faction."

Dr. Bunting, in a very sensitive manner, complained of this speech as a "personal attack."

Mr. Osborn: "We should have men excluded from the Body who have acted thus basely. I have never shaken hands with the reputed author of the *Takings*, and I never will until he has cleared himself. I would have declarations sent to every preacher, to be signed by him."

Some other speakers followed, and much disorder prevailed.

Messrs. Osborn, Vevers, and W. B. Stephenson were appointed to draw up a *Declaration*.

On the next day Mr. Vevers moved, and Mr. Osborn seconded, a resolution of condemnation of the *Fly Sheets* and of sympathy with the leading brethren, especially Drs. Bunting and Newton, and that the resolution be introduced into the Journal.

Dr. Osborn: "I am sorry that Dr. Beaumont was so much interrupted. My object is a religious one. The question is: *First*, Are not these anonymous publications? *Second*, Is not their spirit bad, and such as the Lord hates? The law of Christ commands me to judge in charity, and says that the younger are to be subject to the elder, and that they that rule well are worthy of double honour. No man appreciates certain qualities in Dr. Beaumont more than I do. I read in the *Fly Sheets* that Dr. Bunting acts as if he wished to be put in the first place. Does Dr. Beaumont believe this? I say it is a lie. Slander is as great a crime as drunkenness."

Mr. S. Dunn: "I had hoped for a peaceful Conference. I fear now it will be otherwise. Those who know me will not suspect me of having contributed anything to those naughty papers, the *Fly Sheets*. But some do not know me. I have been addressed as Mr. Radical; I have suffered for Methodism. The battle of Methodism is not fought in the Conference, but at Quarterly Meetings. I have been exposed to the criticisms of the aristocracy. I stood up against Caugheyism in Nottingham. I have seen but one of the papers in question, and have shown it to no one. I am not prepared to say that I disagree with *all* that is in the papers. I think that a wider distribution of offices would be good for the Connexion; that we should not be at a loss for Presidents. I think it beneath our dignity to take such notice of these anonymous publications. I admire the British constitution and law. I know what this statement may cost me. Whether anyone will give me his hand after this I do not know; if he refuse, he is not fit to be a member, much less an officer, in the Evangelical Alliance."

Mr. A. E. Farrar: "It has been said that we do not understand one another. We must both understand and submit to one another. I do not think myself fit to stand in the place of the men maligned, yet I think myself as fit as any of those around me. I would have the lion bearded in his den, the adder scotched in his nest. We have circumstantial evidence of the authorship. When we come to the name, accuse him; and if he be not here, send for him." (Strong signs of general approval of this course.)

Mr. Rowland: "I have had nothing to do with any anonymous publications. I introduced a paper into the Manchester District Meeting which I should wish to be noticed here. A voluntary declaration is a very different thing from the signature of an imposed test drawn up by someone else."

Mr. Hargreaves: "We should have an opportunity of relieving ourselves from the imputation of suspicion. I am sure we younger men look up to our fathers."

Dr. Beaumont: "I object to this matter coming up bit by bit. The resolution contains the words 'wickedly and slanderously,' and yet condemns the use of such language by others."

Mr. Cubitt: "I rise to a point of order"; and then proceeded to speak on the general question.

Dr. Dixon: "Mr. Cubitt has no right to launch a speech under colour of a point of order."

Dr. Beaumont resumed: "It is quackery to deal with symptoms without looking for the cause. Have we determined to deal with symptoms alone? For three years I have done my best to remedy the cause. These papers came to me by mail. I read but one of them, and locked it up in my drawer, and there it lies."

A voice: "It *lies* wherever it is."

Dr. Beaumont went on: "You, Mr. President, counselled 'moderation' of language. Does the word to *lie* come under that head? Mr. Osborn's refusal to shake hands with a brother is a vain and impotent threat. One must endure that calamity."

Dr. Beaumont quoted some of the statements made in the *Fly Sheets*, and asked: "Am I called upon to declare publicly that these are wicked and slanderous lies? I think it a capital mistake for the Conference, time after time, to single out Dr. Bunting for exceptional votes of Conference."

Dr. Bunting : " I beg to speak to order."

Dr. Beaumont : " I am speaking to the *resolution*. Dr. Bunting's name is in the resolution ; the time for his point of order was when that was read at first. Why was it put into the resolution if no allusion is to be made to it ? "

The President : " It is not necessary for us to know what Dr. Beaumont's opinion is of Dr. Bunting."

Dr. Beaumont resumed : " Nor what Mr. Osborn's opinion of him is. The brethren who put Dr. Bunting's name into the resolution put that name before the Conference. I am speaking strictly to the resolution now before the Conference. It is my duty to speak to it, but as the Chair interdicts it, I submit." Amidst cries of " Chair, Chair," Dr. Beaumont sat down.

The President : " I have ruled nothing ; I respectfully advised gentlemanly discussion."

Dr. Beaumont : " I have discharged my duty."

Here Mr. Waugh interrupted : " I complain of Dr. Beaumont ; I do not worship Dr. Bunting."

Dr. Bunting : " I wish the Conference would put an end to this discussion and pass on to other business ; it is but a pretext for attacking me. It is only a stalking horse. My state of health tells me that I have no business here."

Dr. Beaumont attempted to proceed, but the President interposed : " I think these personal altercations should not be allowed ; I hope the Conference will support me." The resolution was put and carried with two dissentients, Dr. Beaumont and Mr. Dunn.

Mr. Osborn : " We issued a test in 1797, and again in 1835. Why not do so in 1847 ? If men refuse to sign, we shall know how to deal with them ; we shall know whom to trust. If we will not be partakers of other men's sins, we must purge ourselves."

Mr. Dunn : " Is the alternative of signing resignation or expulsion ? " No answer.

J. Fowler : " I wish we could leave the matter where it now is : A practically unanimous vote of Conference condemning the *Fly Sheets* in very strong terms, and expressing the warmest support of, and the strongest confidence in, the brethren attacked, especially the most eminent amongst them."

Mr. Fowler's point was purely practical and prudential. He thought the plan proposed far more likely to promote than check the disturbing object of the *Fly Sheets*. A " test," as Mr. Osborn had rightly designated his proposed document, was a very hazardous innovation. The declarations of 1797 and 1835 had disclaimed that character and purpose altogether.

Mr. Alexander Bell, who repudiated any connection with them, and Mr. Hinson took high ground. They maintained that it was not befitting a sedate and dignified body of ministers to disquiet themselves and their people about anonymous fly sheets.

Mr. J. W. Thomas : " We can neither clear ourselves nor discover the offender by issuing a ' test.' I should find it difficult to determine whether I should sign it or not."

Mr. Keeling : " The secrecy of the attacks ought not to be shielded. It appears to me a croquet to decline signing. The liberty of making anonymous attacks ought not to be permitted."

Mr. Osborn : " The man who has written this ought to be expelled, and if I knew him I would impeach him and move his expulsion. I put it upon scriptural grounds. I agree with some points in the *Fly Sheets*. I think it would have been well if the Chair had only been occupied by the same individual once. But this is a matter of opinion ; it does not disturb my confidence in the men. I have had to do with public work, and what have I obtained for it ? Not much, at the expense of domestic quiet. If a man has told a lie, why not say so ? A minister's character is in the hands of his brethren. The *Fly Sheets* have a wide circulation ; let us make our declaration as wide. I press this for peace."

Mr A. E. Farrar moved and Mr. Fowler seconded the order of the day.

Mr. Mason took the view of Mr. Farrar, that the guilty party should be dealt with individually, and without more ado. He said : " I believe I know who it is, though many may have contributed material."

The motion for signature was carried, but against a large minority who voted for the order of the day. The record was : Mr. Osborn has *permission* to obtain signatures.

The President : " I have another memorial from Glasgow against the gown and bands."

Dr. Bunting, just before the inquiry into character began, remarked : " If every impropriety were handed down to posterity, some on my right would appear in no enviable position."

Dr. Beaumont and Mr. Dunn were wont to choose seats in pews to the right of the ex-Presidents.

When the question came : " Any objection to Jabez Bunting ?" the great man stood up and said :—

" If any person has anything against me, such as is said in the *Fly Sheets*, or was hinted at yesterday if language has any meaning, I will relieve him from any previous notice. I now give a challenge ; let him speak *now*, or for ever hereafter hold his peace. Some persons in the Body say that they believe something of what is in the *Fly Sheets*. Let them come forward. I do not wish to disturb the good feeling which is in some measure restored, but not complete. I think I have more popularity than I desire, but it is to me disagreeable to be represented as a pope-dictator. But you know how to take off the discount from such talk, yet we cannot go on as we have been doing ; not that I care about it, but I wish to be quiet. I disclaim all wish to be a firebrand, but I cannot come to the Conference and hear all these things said for and against me. I wish to attend to my soul's concerns. My heart is full of affection towards you. I wish to stand well with you. I think I ought to stand well with you ; if I do not, tell me so and I shall decline all office. I do not mean to leave you—not that !—but to retire into quietness."

A touching and effective unbosoming of a mighty spirit irresistible in reading, but what to hear and see from a veteran leader and commander !

Mr. Dunn: "I have great respect for Dr. Bunting. *I, too, am prepared to answer any question*, but must stand by the sentiments yesterday expressed."

Dr. Beaumont complained that Dr. Bunting had neither quoted nor fairly represented the speeches made yesterday, to which he had referred in the beginning of his speech.

The next case of interest was that of another young minister who, after some years at the Institution and appointment to prominent Circuits, had "entered into correspondence with members of the Church of England," with a view to episcopal ordination and resigning his ministry amongst us, on the ground that he "could not remain any longer among the Methodists, as he thought the episcopal form the right one." He had been in the habit for some time of signing children with the cross at baptism, but had learnt this from an ex-President.

Dr. Bunting: "I would have great tenderness shown to him."

Mr. Atherton: "He is under a moral obligation to refund the expense of his training at our Institution. Such a conscience as will allow him not to do this is a *rascally* one."

The ex-President's personal connection with the delinquent added force to this pronouncement.

Mr. Osborn: "I think a man may change his mind, and not return his money."

Dr. Beaumont: "I do not concur with Mr. Osborn."

Dr. Bunting: "It is not honest that he should have taken such steps without having conferred with his brethren. Mr. Farrar" (the House Governor) "must look after him; he signed a *round robin* that he would refund if ever he should leave."

J. Fowler: "Was this young man at the Institution when the students were encouraged to go to hear Dr. Chalmer's lectures in favour of Church establishments, but not allowed to attend Dr. Wardlaw's lectures in reply?" A great hubbub followed, in which the matter dropped.

Mr. Atherton, being requested to publish his charge, said: "I wish it could be done cheaply, that Brothers West and Osborn may have the gratification of a little cheap literature."

Mr. Young proposed to merge two Cornish Circuits into neighbouring ones, and to give up a Preacher. Grimsby requested an additional married minister, with only an unmarried man's allowance from the Circuit, the rest to come from the Contingent Fund.

Dr. Beaumont: "I think that here is an anomaly to be inquired into. Here is a Cornish Circuit giving up a minister and yet keeping up its missionary contributions, and Grimsby Circuit contributing to foreign missions £700 a year, and yet applying to the Contingent Fund for the support of its own minister." It appeared that they were also supporting a hired local Preacher.

This was Brother G. Nicholson, the finest man of his class, and an immense benefit to the place.

Mr. Thornton: "Those who support the foreign missions generally support best the work at home." (Cries of "No, no.")

Dr. Newton stated cases just the opposite to Mr. Thornton's view.

Dr. Bunting complained of "this attack on the missions." He proposed that a young married man with £24 from the Contingent Fund should be appointed; or, if this could not be, voted through the District Meeting as an *extraordinary*.

Dr. Bunting: "I am unwilling to give up hope of success in Scotland." He proposed an additional minister for Paisley. (Agreed.)

The ex-President: "Did not the Conference understand that Mr. Caughey was not to be allowed to preach in our chapels?" Answer, "Yes."

Mr. Keeling read the Minute from the Journal to that effect.

The ex-President: "Then did I not do right in reminding the Superintendents who violated that decision that they were putting themselves in opposition to the Conference?" Answer, "Yes."

It came out that many Superintendents in leading Circuits had set at naught the decision of the Conference and the inhibition of the President. Two of these were chairmen of Districts, and all of them heretofore law-abiding brethren. Mr. Caughey had been allowed to carry on a campaign in Huddersfield, Nottingham, York, and several other Circuit towns. "This feeble administration of the Superintendents" had caused much mischief, and in Huddersfield an anti-Connexional demonstration. They had sent to Conference a memorial of a revolutionary kind. The Huddersfield Superintendents defended themselves on the ground that they thought the decision had been that no Superintendent should *invite* Mr. Caughey, not that he should not allow him to preach in his Circuit. Many strongly condemned the Superintendents.

Mr. G. Osborn: "I doubt whether the Stationing Committee has not exceeded its powers in visiting these brethren penally by removing them. I do not object to some initial proceedings in the Stationing Committee founded on the decisions of a District Meeting, but I do think this act objectionable."

Dr. Beaumont: "I concur with Mr. Osborn. I doubt whether the Stationing Committee have a right on *ex parte* evidence to act as they have done."

Dr. Bunting: "Mr. Osborn's doctrine is bad doctrine."

The ex-President complained that the letter of remonstrance which he had sent to a Superintendent had been printed in the *Wesleyan*, and he had been attacked in a Yorkshire paper for his *private* communication by a person signing himself "An old Methodist." He then read a letter which he had received from a brother in reply to his remonstrance, which he said was a sample of the rest.

A very able and well-expressed letter in another tone was read from another Superintendent. The Superintendent and Chairman said : " I did not know that Conference had interdicted Mr. Caughey's preaching." He made a defence of both his administration and his discreditable letter to the President. The Superintendent and Chairman of York took shelter behind a *Minute* of his District Meeting, exculpating him for having acted contrary to the emphatic and recorded judgment of the Conference. When asked to read also the names of the mover and seconder of the resolution he hesitated, but on being asked the ground of his reluctance to inform his brethren he replied the mover was the Rev. James Everett ; the name of the seconder was not entered, and the Chairman could not tax his memory with it, but there was disclosed a very unassuring fact. No minister in the York District meeting the Conference, who knew Mr. Everett as a writer, preacher, and converser, had the slightest doubt of his authorship of the *Fly Sheets*. Yet, instead of " bearding the lion in his den," etc., " the lion " was bearding the Conference in its sanctuary once again. He had taken an active, leading, and effective part in the District Committee, not only moving but carrying a resolution in defence of a signal disregard of Conference authority, and sending that refractory resolution up to Conference from a District Meeting which comprised a man like Robert Wood. Mr. Wood, indeed, complained to Conference that the lawless conduct of the Chairman had thrown great difficulties in the way of law-respecting Superintendents, and that the peace of York had been purchased by the disturbance of the rest of the District. It came out that Mr. Caughey had gone to Scarborough, and that it had required almost heroic firmness on the part of Mr. Wood to keep possession of his own pulpit.

Dr. Bunting : " This discussion has taken a very singular turn. Did Mr. B. leave his own chapels in Liverpool to go to hear Mr. Caughey ? "

Mr. B. : " I am under great obligations to Mr. Caughey. I did go to hear him, but am sorry if I did wrong." The York Superintendent's defence was : " I am sure that the law was not passed in the usual way, and I remember that in the case of the Marriage Act the President's request was not observed by all the brethren."

A letter was read from the Circuit Stewards of Sheffield East complaining of the discourteous treatment which their Superintendent (Mr. Rigg) " had suffered through refusing to give up the pulpit to Mr. Caughey." Mr. Rigg described the facts alluded to. Mr. A. E. Farrar defended his own action in the matter.

Mr. A. Bell had told Mr. Caughey that he was to blame in staying. "It is time the affair was quietly settled."

Dr. Bunting: "I move that there is nothing in the case which should affect the stations." (Agreed.)

Dr. Bunting: "I feel that I was almost too lenient in my proposition about the recall of Mr. Caughey, but the sentence recorded in the Journal ought not to have been departed from. Are we not to be bound by an agreement to each other, without being taunted from York, Huddersfield, and elsewhere, that it has not the force of law? For instance, as to gown and bands, I would not make a law which might seem to condemn the usages of other Churches. I think the brethren who have committed themselves, and said strong things on either side, will see ground to change. As to Mr. Caughey, some explanations are very palliatory but not justificatory; I believe they have acted from the best motives, but I would have things done by agreement."

Mr. Reece: "What Dr. Bunting has proposed is the safe middle course."

Dr. Dixon: "As a Superintendent I should have felt myself bound by the resolution. I sympathise with Mr. Rigg. I think it would be best to pass an Act of Oblivion, with an understanding for the future but no formal resolution. I think some brethren have acted weakly. There are degrees of blame. I cannot agree with a resolution which goes beyond a very slight degree of disapproval."

Mr. Scott: "Great evils have arisen from departing from our agreement. I hope we shall consent to be governed by one another. I object to putting everything in the Minutes. I cannot but think that Chairmen should have acted more manfully. Blame is due to those who have violated the brotherly agreement."

Mr. S. D. Waddy: "It is admitted that there was a declaration from the Chair, and that this was understood. Those who have disregarded this have done wrong, from whatever motive. I think it will be necessary to publish more than we have done hitherto."

Mr. G. Osborn: "I think we have not a competent mode of making public what has been decided. I myself have been in some difficulty from want of this."

The President put the principle: "That an agreement, pronounced from the Chair and recorded in the Journal, is binding upon all brethren." Passed *unanimously*.

Dr. Bunting then noticed the memorials, beginning with *Sheffield*. "I think some of these memorials are disloyal and fanatical, and are made so by Dr. Caughey. The *Huddersfield* memorial is full of all that is antagonistic to Methodism, and opposed to right views. I should oppose it, but cautiously and kindly; but tell them their views are not consistent with the safety of Methodism. I move that a committee be appointed to tell them, in a firm and decided manner, that we will not give up to them what we refused to Kilham and Warren."

Mr. Bowers: "I would suggest whether a deputation should not visit Huddersfield. I know the society is in a critical state." The committee was appointed.



Dr. Bunting then called attention to the evils arising from the continuance of Mr. Caughey. "Mr. Marsden has assured the Conference that Mr. Caughey had received £400 for the copyright of his *Letters*, yet a sillier book it has never been my misfortune to read. I had been for Mr. Caughey before, but this changed my mind. I think we must request his Methodist bishops to keep him at home. If they have no control over him, we shall know how to deal with him. I would suggest that the committee first appointed should draw up a resolution for our governance in future." (Agreed.)

J. Fowler strongly opposed the adjournment of the Conference during the sitting of the Stationing Committee; the idea that no business could be effectively transacted in the absence of certain individuals. He moved: "That we proceed with business, Mr. T. Jackson taking his brother's place in the Chair." (Carried.)

It was moved that the boy who had made the greatest general proficiency at either of the schools should have an additional year without expense to his father.

Mr. McDonald: "This is not without precedent, except in the matter of expense to the father. I had the honour to be the first boy who received this advantage, and a great one it was to me." It was explained that the abandoned practice had been revived; but it was now proposed to relieve the father of expense. (Agreed.)

Eighty-two chapels had been built during the year, at a cost of £39,000.

Mr. Cusworth wanted Mr. Crowther appointed examiner at Kingswood in perpetuity.

Mr. John Farrar opposed this innovation.

The President objected to this "tying the hands of a committee," so the case ended.

Dr. Bunting: "I wish that business may be suspended, and that Mr. Heald, having been elected Member of Parliament, be admitted to the Conference."

Dr. Beaumont: "I object to this."

Mr. G. Osborn: "I should hesitate; it may embarrass us hereafter."

Mr. F. A. West: "I think with Mr. Osborn."

The majority said "Yes," and the brethren clapped as the M.P. entered. He said: "I am glad of such a welcome from a body of ministers whom I have been taught to respect. When I come to the ministrations of the truth, I feel that I come home. I shall never cease to feel my obligations to the Methodist preaching and Class visitation while I breathe. I feel my responsibility greatly. I shall be more a servant of the Church than ever, and Cobden and the West Riding are not more united than I shall be with my friend Westhead. I should have a lower estimate of myself than ever, if I had now for the first time to hoist my flag. I am glad to enter Parliament as a Christian man, but more particularly as a Wesleyan Methodist. I have heard slander poured out on my native place, which I now represent in Parliament, but I believe that we are sound-hearted; there is not a Methodist in the place but has been hand and heart with me. The battle has been between the Church and Methodism on the one side, and political Dissent on the other. The Church has done honour to Methodism. The Church could not carry a man, but they said if the Methodists could find a man they would support him. The victory was attained on great ecclesiastical principles."

It is necessary to explain that Cobden had for years been a member for the town which the Methodist member now represented, but had been returned unopposed for the West Riding. Mr. Westhead, another prominent Methodist, had been elected to Parliament on the Liberal side.

Mr. G. Osborn: "I would suggest that a letter be sent to our other friend, Mr. Westhead, embodying our good wishes."

Mr. S. D. Waddy: "I most heartily concur in the propriety of Mr. Osborn's motion."

Dr. Beaumont maintained that the mischief was the meddling with party politics at all.

Long pauses and various contrivances in the stations, perhaps a little less than the usual bustle attended the election of Chairmen, and the brethren did not disperse, as heretofore, to chat. J. Fowler elected to Hull by 150 votes. I do, however, unfeignedly regret the onerous duties now imposed upon me, and should have been thankful to remain out of the chairmanship.

Dr. Beaumont: "I wish there could be a little more variety in the representatives sent and received from Ireland." This remark was strongly condemned, and much time was lost over it.

Dr. Newton: "I feel *humbled* at this speech."

The President: "If we are to be humbled at indiscreet speeches, we *may* be humbled all the year round."

A vote was forthwith taken and passed unanimously of esteem for the Irish representatives.

A deputation is to be sent to Huddersfield to converse with them on the extreme demands of their memorial. Mr. McDonald proposed the President and Secretary, Drs. Hannah and Dixon, and Mr. Scott.

A very spirited debate followed the reading of a letter from Mr. B., complaining of the manner in which he had been treated by the Book Committee. Mr. J. W. Thomas made an eloquent speech.

Dr. Bunting: "This is a review of the reviewing."

Mr. G. Osborn: "No; it is a review of the Book Committee. I am sorry that so much prejudice exists against the Book Committee and other committees in London; there is an undercurrent of feeling against them. I am sorry that Dr. Bunting and Mr. Jackson have taken the ground they have done. I think it untenable."

Mr. S. D. Waddy: "More care should be taken in regard to books published by us than by others. I think this book unworthy of the time consumed in this debate."

Mr. Cubitt: "Mr. B. has no taste for poetry, though he can write prose in a masterly way."

Dr. Bunting: "I entreat the Conference not to set a bad precedent." He referred to the difficulties and responsibility of the Book Committee. He moved the order of the day. An amendment was moved: "That the case

be reconsidered by the Book Committee." The motion was carried by a large majority.

I was a member of the Book Committee at the time, and can well remember the debate. I could not but agree with the Editors, and Dr. Bunting and Mr. Jackson, that the book was neither worthy of the Book Room nor useful to our people, being to a large extent made up of petty, nibbling, pedantic, verbal criticism. Yet I was vastly struck with Mr. Arthur's modest, manly, easy advocacy of the book, without the slightest air of heroic opposition to the seniors.

Mr. Osborn again introduced the subject of cheap literature. He produced specimens of cheap books, and moved that the committee take into their early consideration the importance of republishing a cheap edition of *Wesley's Works* and Benson's "Commentary."

Dr. Bunting: "I propose referring the matter to a special committee."

The motion was withdrawn in favour of the amendment.

Mr. West spoke strongly on Mr. Osborn's side. He wished we could sell dozens of Butler's *Analogy*.

On the report of the *Pastoral Committee*, Mr. G. Osborn spoke in mitigation of the obligation to perform Pastoral visitation. Contrasting ourselves with other ministers, he observed: "Richard Baxter said, 'I can only visit fourteen families a day along with my curate.'"

Mr. O. denied the practicability of the systematic Pastoral visitation recommended by the committee. "My heart is very sad about it."

How many Methodist Preachers visit on an average fourteen families a day?

Dr. Bunting again spoke against ministers straying from their Circuits to chapel openings and missionary services, which were "so protracted and multiplied as to become a great evil. A man's Circuit should be to him his own wedded wife."

Mr. S. D. Waddy moved: "That the resolution be printed in a circular and sent to each minister."

Dr. Bunting: "Our people expect something of this kind. If the resolutions be not printed in the Minutes, they will know why, and will get to see them in a half-clandestine way."

The report of the Catechumen Committee was read by Mr. G. Osborn.

Mr. S. Dunn was called upon to make a statement of the manner in which he had worked the plan in Nottingham. He said: "The catechist meets the classes two weeks in succession, and I meet them the third week."

The President: "I am not an innovator. I agree with Dr. Bunting that 'repentance, faith, and holiness' are the very core of Methodism. But how many hundreds of thousands pass through our Sunday schools without these blessings!"

Dr. Beaumont: "We shall not get our young people converted unless our sermons are made up of Scriptural truth."

The recommendations of the Committee were adopted

In reply to the vote of thanks to him as Missionary Secretary, Dr. Bunting said: "Mr. President, I am encouraged by this vote, especially after having received such a lecture from yourself. The Canada business is very perplexing. Strange that the men who were against the union seven years ago are now for it. If a man would go to Montreal he would have the best Circuit in the Connexion. More than ordinary attention must be paid to this mission. I move that Dr. Dixon and Dr. Stinson be our representatives to Canada and the United States."

Dr. Dixon: "I have not the power of resisting."

Dr. Beaumont recommended that some generally worded resolution should be passed expressive of approval of reunion with Canada, and the steps taken towards it at Toronto.

Dr. Bunting drew up the resolution, which was adopted by the Conference.

Dr. Bunting: "Missionaries should stay abroad twenty years."

Dr. Hannah proposed that a young man should be appointed as Assistant Classical Tutor at Didsbury."

Dr. Beaumont: "Cannot a layman be found?"

Dr. Bunting: "I have always thought that a man not a minister would be best; but there is not time to discuss it now."

A few hands were held up, and Dr. Hannah's proposal passed.

A brother called me to account in Conference for expressing my honest judgment in committee. I strongly objected to this attempt of one member of a committee to put another member on his defence in Conference for having done his duty.

The Southwark Circuit had selected Mr. Bromley as one of their ministers. This was said to be "because of his sympathising with certain anti-Methodistic views expressed in that Circuit."

Mr. Dunn urged his appointment, as he had heard there was some combination to keep Mr. Bromley out of London.

Dr. Bunting: "If Mr. Dunn urge this, I shall move that the minute on Mr. Bromley's case be read. In my judgment, he ought not to go to London, especially not to Southwark. He must set himself right with the Conference. I love Mr. Bromley, but I think him crotchety and much misled."

Dr. Beaumont: "I seldom meddle with stations, but I think Mr. Bromley ought to go to London. He is not a common man, and you ought not to alienate him." The Conference said: "Go on," and adjourned at 10 p.m.

My own knowledge of the leading men in Southwark and of Mr. Bromley strongly inclines me to think that his appointment to Southwark would have been the safer course. Important points were overlooked. Firstly, the best corrective of the mischief of Mr. Bromley's crotchetyness was *its own aggressive universality*; even as the self-assertiveness of Samuel Dunn was its own sufficient refutation. Secondly, the refusal to send Mr. Bromley to the Circuit which selected him gave a most untimely countenance to one of the charges brought by

the *Fly Sheets*. Thirdly, as Dr. Beaumont hinted, James Bromley alienated by a grievance was more dangerous than James Bromley left to labour among those who liked him.

On the report of the Education Committee, Mr. Osborn objected to the Government measure. It was called out: "We are not to argue on the principle."

The President: "I think no practical result can come out of a discussion."

Mr. Osborn: "I defer to the President, and will not make a speech; but so far defer to my own conscience as to propose a resolution, 'That we do not now sanction the Government measure by receiving money, but pause a year and then report our position.'" This amendment was not sanctioned. The motion in favour of the scheme passed with three dissentients—G. Osborn, W. Griffith, and A. Learoyd.

This planetary conjunction of George Osborn and William Griffith in the open firmament of Conference, and just "two years before the earthquake," is very notable.

Mr. S. R. Hall gave notice of applying next year for a man to be set apart wholly to education work. "Unless this be done, we Secretaries shall utterly fail. Mr. Vasey is able but not willing. His conscience is in his Circuit work. Mr. J. G. Wilson has told us he is under no obligation to do any of this work" (he was Mr. Scott's assistant in Third London). A long, stirring discussion about secretaries ended in Mr. M. C. Taylor being added.

Dr. Bunting read the resolution of the Caughey Committee. "The Conference is and always has been glad of revivals; but regrets that feelings of discord have been created, and diminution of respect for the regular ministers, leading many to undervalue their stated services. We respect the rule of 1797 prohibiting our pulpits to Preachers from America who are not duly authorised." This temperately worded resolution passed *nem. con.*

Mr. West read the *excellent* Pastoral Address, which was heartily approved by Conference. A note was read from Mr. Farmer praying for a special committee to be appointed to look into the present state of Methodism, and enclosing £200 for Home Missions.

The resolution against Sabbath desecration is to be repeated.

Mr. West regretted "that the conversation on the state of the work of God had been postponed by much less important matters, till we had reached the close of the third Friday evening."

Dr. Bunting: "Since we cannot leave before to-morrow, let us have the conversation now." Many complained of the detention.

On Saturday morning the conversation on the work of God took place.

Dr. Dixon took up his almost invariable point. "The state of the Connexion depends mainly on the character of our own preaching. Power in the pulpit is the great necessity. We Preachers must make the best of ourselves. There is a proper Wesleyan revivalism, and we only object to what is really wrong in imported revivalistic methods. In reading the "Life of Charles Wesley" I was very much surprised about the prayer-meetings which he and those who laboured with him attended to. We must act on the aggressive principle; we must not be afraid of going a little out of our way."

Mr. Bowers : " I wish we had a day set apart for humiliation and prayer. *Our own souls need to be quickened.* We should read Mr. Angell James' book on '*Earnest Ministry.*' *That is the want of the times.* We want more *pointed* preaching and more *oversight of the flock.* I fear that our dear friend Mr. Osborn's mode of putting forth his sentiments will appear something like an apology for inattention to Pastoral visitation."

Mr. Fowler spoke, but unfortunately *suo more* does not make a note of his own speech.

Dr. Bunting, called for, said : " Though we regret the lateness of this conversation, we are glad to have had this opportunity. I hope next Conference there will be an *order of business* sketched out which will give us more time for the more important matters. I think with Mr. Fowler; we have the power to make a desirable change where it can be done peaceably. Let no leader put a man out, let no one be left without a ticket who has not first been seen by a pastor. A careful shepherd looks after each of his flock. I approve of a day of fasting and prayer. There is an absolute necessity for a real fresh baptism of the spirit. I recommend a protracted meeting at the September District Meeting; we must occupy more time in these special services. I would have the widest practicable circulation given amongst our people to this year's Pastoral Address." Dr. Bunting was requested to embody in a resolution the substance of his speech.

Dr. Alder arrived in Conference during the conversation. He said : " There is a total change in the Canadian Conference since 1839. The Articles of Union were agreed to by eighty-eight ministers against six, and their objection was rather local than anti-British. The public authorities in Canada rejoice in the reunion. They have agreed to give to our missions £750 for every £1,000 we raise. In respect of our last two years' outlay they have given us £3,800. On my return voyage I was allowed a passage on the Admiralty Packet, which was denied to others."

Six hundred and fifty ministers in all have signed the protest against the *Fly Sheets*.

As the brethren betook themselves to their various Circuits the outlook seemed but dubious and overcast. Notwithstanding local flushes of a somewhat artificial revivalism, there had been a decrease in Great Britain of 2,089 and in Ireland of 2,913. Some of our oldest and most staid societies were in an unsettled state.

The wisdom or mistakenness of Mr. Fowler's counsel with regard to the *Fly Sheets* will be best judged of in the light of the fast following catastrophe.

The only future President amongst the candidates at the Liverpool Conference was the now Venerable Charles Garrett, who has so long been a sort of Methodist Bishop of Liverpool.

## HULL CONFERENCE OF 1848.

The One Hundred and Fifth Conference was the first of those solemn convocations held in Hull. It was well known that the election to the Chair would fall on one of two distinguished ministers—Dr. Newton or Mr. Fowler. No one doubted that Mr. Fowler would have "*proceeded*" President, almost in the natural course of things, but for the fact that this year the re-electability of the best known Wesleyan Methodist minister, and the most popular amongst his brethren, came round this very year. I threw Dr. Newton into one of his hearty fits of laughter—no very arduous achievement—by an audacious pleasantry which was perpetrated in an after-breakfast colloquy. Dr. Newton had preached the night before his annual sermon in Waltham Street Chapel, Hull, and I was invited to meet him and Mr. Fowler at Captain Dale Brown's. After breakfast we were left to a little Pastoral Conference in the cosy breakfast-room. Dr. Newton turned suddenly to Mr. Fowler and remarked smilingly: "So they say that you are to be President." To relieve Mr. Fowler I at once assumed the responsibility of reply, and pronounced in a tone of oracular decisiveness: "It will be one of us three." The effrontery of this quiet self-nomination to the triumvirate was too much for the Doctor's gravity, but it relieved the situation.

There was another reason why Dr. Newton's re-election should not be postponed a year. It would have been felt by himself, and misinterpreted by the Caughey party, as a rebuff for his resolute resistance of the claims of that revivalist. Mr. Fowler strongly objected to be put in nomination as against Dr. Newton, and, as he said, he had for the first time canvassed in a Presidential election by asking his friends to vote for Dr. Newton. So this noble native of the East Coast of Yorkshire was called to handse the Presidential chair in the great East Yorkshire port. I do not recall another case in which the voting was so nearly confined to two names. Dr. Newton had 197, Mr. Fowler 83, Dr. Beecham 3, and just half a dozen others, including Thomas Jackson and Dr. Beaumont, one apiece. Mr. Fowler was elected Secretary by a large majority. Two fine men, F. A. West and W. Barton, were elected to the Hundred. Mr. West polled 132 votes, Mr. Barton 116. Dr. Beaumont nominated Samuel Dunn, who received 68 votes, being next to Mr. Barton.

Mr. West said: "I accept this not as an honour but as a *trust*. I have ever sought the welfare of Methodism. I will endeavour to maintain an independent course, and trust to have grace to be faithful."

Mr. Barton: "I hope this kindness will prove an additional stimulus to devoted service."

Mr. Fowler records his regret that his Secretaryship to the Conference will seriously abridge his own Journal. But his adeptness enabled him to report a wonderful amount of the more important speeches. And although as the youngest of the six Hull ministers, and the one in special charge of Great Thornton Street, the Conference Chapel; and as Mr. Fowler was tied to the Secretary's chair, and Mr. Steward and his elder colleagues in the other Circuit could not be "*fashed*" with any such diaconal duties, the whole brunt of the subministration to the Conference devolved of course on my colleague, Mr. B. Waddy, and myself, and as he resided in another part of the town it fell chiefly upon me. However, I was able to attend to all discussions of great interest, as the brethren were too engrossed in them to miss me.

An eminent minister, Mr. Beal, was the only survivor of the year 1808. Dr. Beaumont pleaded that it would be a slight on such a man not to elect him first.

Dr. Bunting: "We must have an election. We have heretofore added other names. I have no objection to vote for Mr. Beal, if Dr. Beaumont had not blundered about the plan of pacification, but I must insist on the right of election. Mr. Beal is entitled to the honour, and it will put a slight upon him to pass him by."

Nevertheless, a younger and far inferior man was elected over his head. Mr. Beal came in, however, on the next voting.

In the character of a candidate, the phrase, "*Wesleyan Church*" occurred. To this Mr. G. Osborn decidedly objected. "*I would have us adhere to Wesleyan phraseology.*"

Dr. Bunting: "I think Wesleyan Methodist Churches is the more correct. We are members of the *Church of Christ*."

The objection was not entertained by Conference. A long time was taken up in discussing the case of a fine, well-educated candidate, who had managed to mystify himself about the witness of the Spirit. A rather obscurely worded letter was read from him. A senior minister testified to his "sincere and devout piety."

Dr. Bunting: "Mr. Wesley was all that *before his conversion*. We must have more than this, and must guard against frittering away our Methodist doctrines."



Mr. Reece: "I ask myself, 'How can a man whose views are so obscure guide our people right?'"

Mr. West: "It is a point of great importance that no man should be allowed to preach, even as a local Preacher, who is not clear both in doctrine and experience as to the witness of the Spirit. I should hesitate about receiving a candidate in this state of mind."

Dr. Bunting: "It is said to be owing to his 'mathematical turn of mind. I do not believe this."

The candidate was postponed a year. I knew him intimately and loved him much. I was a member of the "July Committee" which examined him next year. It was clear to me that the real mischief was an over-indulged mental idiosyncrasy. Alas! he never shook himself clear of it. I cannot recall a single case in which a Methodist ministerial course began in doctrinal cloudiness and confusedness that did not continue and end in weariness and painfulness to the minister and his brethren.

Mr. Osborn: "Why is the list of candidates from the Mission Field not read in Conference?"

On the question being asked: "Who are becoming supernumeraries?" Dr. Bunting said: "I think this is the time for me to speak. I have a deep feeling in intimating my intention to become a supernumerary. The Missionary Committee think me sincere. I do not know why no record of my request is recorded in the District Minutes. Perhaps it was kindness. I am sure I am not grieving God in deciding to do this. I think myself justified in asking to retire. I cannot take a Circuit. I will not say more at present."

When mission affairs came before the Conference Dr. Bunting repeated his request, but left himself wholly in the hands of Conference. The President essayed to put the question, but Conference replied with a decisive and overwhelming "No, no!" It was felt that the case of Dr. Bunting was unique.

Dr. Bunting then brought forward the recommendation of the committee: "That a young unmarried minister, William Arthur, should be appointed as a fifth Secretary, to speak at the chief public meetings through the land, and to stir up the collectors everywhere." The Secretary of the Conference, Dr. Beaumont, and others opposed this on the ground that the missionary income would not warrant such an additional outlay, and that there was already a travelling lay agent with identical duties; that it did not touch the case of Dr. Bunting, who for some years had not been able to address public meetings,

even in his own district, and that Mr. Arthur was wanted where he was (at Paris). I confess I did not on this point agree with my two admirable Superintendents. It seemed to me to be "penny wise and pound foolish." It had been my happy lot to hear Mr. Arthur on the platform many times and in many places, and I could not but regard him as one of the greatest of our Anglo-Irish orators, with all the glow and lofty passion of a Grattan, and all his dignified and compressed argumentativeness.

Dr. Beaumont moved: "That a letter of condolence should be sent to the family and church of the recently departed Dr. Hamilton of Leeds." He said that Mr. Ely, who knew him best, had declared that "his devotion exceeded his intellectual power."

This proposal struck me as very graceful, considering the blood relationship of Dr. Hamilton to Methodism, his unbounded readiness to help its cause on occasions small or great, and his unstinted admiration of its ministers. The suggestion was, however, but partially entertained.

On the third day of the Conference business was interrupted to announce that rebellion had broken out in Ireland, and to request that the Irish representatives be allowed to return immediately to their families and flocks. After prayer by the President and ex-President, commending them to the protection of God, they took their leave.

Mr. Bowers expressed his regret that so many Circuits were giving up ministers, and a discussion took place which was adjourned.

Mr. G. Osborn presented £10, to be given in the name of the President and Secretary, to the Working Men's Lord's Day Rest Association.

A London Superintendent was deposed for maladministration which had caused disturbance. Dr. Bunting, objecting to the sentence, was in a minority of one. A brother was charged with having "spoken against certain members and acts of the Conference." His defence was: "I thought I had a right to take which side I pleased." Another brother was reported to be afflicted with "a strange idiosyncrasy—he declines to use a razor." It was decided that he should be sent for and conversed with by selected ministers. This committee recommended that he should either shave or sit down. This reads very strangely after the lapse of seven times seven years.

A request was made by the Trustees that the Conference would waive the enforcement of the use of liturgical services in the Conference chapel.

This was stoutly opposed by Mr. Osborn, who carried "the order of the day" after a lengthened and exciting discussion.

Mr. Scott suggested that trustees of chapels should be applied to for subscriptions in aid of worn-out ministers.

Dr. Bunting: "I feel an objection to anything new being introduced. Two sources of income are already sanctioned. The subscriptions might be increased. If the fund go down, something else must be done."

The Richmond Governorship having again become vacant, Dr. Bunting proposed Mr. S. Jackson as governor at Richmond, "as an example of gravity and manly thought, spirit, and character, and of great assiduity."

Dr. Beaumont: "I second that motion. I think it will be satisfactory to the Connexion."

Mr. S. Jackson: "I will submit to the decision of Conference. I shall endeavour to imbue the young men with a love for catechumen classes. I am a crotchety old man, but if you are ready to go with me on these points, I will submit."

Dr. Beaumont: "If Mr. Jackson goes to Richmond to make it a riding-school for his own hobby, I should hesitate."

Dr. Bunting: "I think that is a qualification."

Mr. William Griffith gave notice of two motions: 1. "That we ought not to receive grants of money from the public purse which are also given in support of any form of error." 2. "That as State establishments are claiming attention, every minister shall be allowed to take what course he pleases, without being subject to ecclesiastical censure."

But when the time came for submitting these proposals he begged leave to withdraw them both for want of time for their discussion.

The most painful part of the proceedings, to myself especially, was that relating to the mutual misunderstandings and recriminations of my two late colleagues in the Second London Circuit. The case had been sent to a committee, but the data were so impalpable and made up of such minutiae, and looked at by the parties from such opposite points of view, that the report of the committee consisted of but little more than a confession of inability to get at the essential merits of the case, and a recommendation that the Conference should hear the statements of both parties and form its judgment upon that. Appealed to by both parties and by Mr. Reece, who resided in the Circuit, I found myself in a very queer position, but escaped absorption into the dispute by strictly confining my replies to questions of fact of which I had been personally cognisant. Yet it would have been easy to solve in a sentence the whole mystery of the matter, but that would have thrown the chief blame upon the Conference itself. The affair occupied great part of two sessions. Beaumont, being put upon his mettle, was extremely eloquent,

but the Conference was as pitifully at a loss as was the choice committee. The whole mischief lay in two words, *injudiciousness* of stationing and *incompatibility* of colleagueship. From first to last it was a rueful business.

A resolution from the Manchester ministers recommending that the numbers should be taken from the June quarter occasioned a lively discussion, till the President suggested that it should lie over till next Conference.

There was a decrease in Great Britain of 518, in Ireland of 1,491, in the Missions of 65 ; net decrease 2,768.

A searching inquiry followed as to the local causes of declension. *London* had lost 442 ; cause, "Want of more efficiency in the ministry, and squabbles among ministers." *Bedford* 120 : "Financial embarrassments, and disputes about the Marriage Bill." *Norwich* 400 : "Chiefly in the city, owing to disputes about the education movement."

Dr. Bunting : "Do the people read the *Wesleyan* ?"

The President (Dr. Newton, who had *seen more* of the Connexion than any other man) : "I openly avow my conviction that reading the Methodist newspapers has damaged our societies."

*Oxford*, "Want of energy in working Methodism." *Exeter*, "Neglect of country places, and of *Liverpool Minutes*." *Bristol* had an increase of 186, owing to the influence of special religious services held in connection with the September District meeting. *Birmingham* had an *increase* of 63, attributed to "Mr. Caughey's labours ; his converts stand so far."

Mr. Haydon complained that the Bradford (Eastbrook) leaders had turned their Class meeting into something else.

*Leeds* attributed its increase, notwithstanding "the depression of trade," to the prevalence of peace in the societies. *Sheffield* laid the blame of its decrease on "the want of a due degree of Pastoral attention." The state of *Shetland* was so serious that a committee was appointed to take it into close consideration. They declared a diminution in the number of ministers to be necessitated by the numerical decline. The statement of the Chairman that the chief cause of declension was an unwillingness to meet in Class on the part of the people in these northern latitudes called forth the first suggestion ever made in Conference—at least, so far as I can find—to assimilate the terms of membership in Great Britain to those in North Britain, and not adjust the latter to the

former. The proposal came, however, in such a vague and shapeless form as to derive its main importance from its author—one of the most influential of the younger ministers. It proposed that “*some* provision should be made for and an ecclesiastical status given to the large class who attend our ministry but do not meet in Class.” This brought Dr. Beaumont to his feet.

He had spent several years of his ministry in the great Scotch cities, and had seen and felt the working of the system of alternative membership. He warned the Conference against the introduction of such “a large question” in such an incidental and promiscuous fashion, without even notice of motion—a question which involved the vital interests as well as the whole machinery of Methodism.

Mr. Reece thought that what we wanted was not some substitute for the class meeting but an improvement in it, through an improved, or rather a revived, method of training leaders for their duty. Our best leaders had been raised in *band meetings*. Revive the *band meetings*. Have a *closer* rather than a looser fellowship.

Mr. F. A. West: “I do not despond as to the revival of the class meeting, and by this means a steady increase of our numbers in the genuine and original Methodist way. Some causes of decline are removable or mitigable. Villages have been given up on the plea of attending to the towns. I doubt whether the towns have been more attended to where this is done. I think we have looked too much to respectability and intellectuality and surface culture. Don't disparage the class meeting in favour of this sort of thing. The prejudices against the class meeting arise from *externalism*. We are in danger of cultivating a *Methodist Puseyism*, which is the worst of all. I find that the persons least well affected towards class meetings are the very persons who are in the greatest need of it. We want to raise up a *spiritually minded* community, and this will not be done by ‘respectable leaders, who would not cross a street to save a sinner.’ We must look fairly at Methodism, and deal fairly with it, not swerving on the right hand or the left. The mission of Methodism is not fulfilled by giving to our seat-holders an ecclesiastical status. Our mission is, and our effort must be, to *save their souls*. It is very easy to attach too much to the change in circumstances. The rivalry of other Churches we have had to contend with from the beginning. But our great antagonist is the *ungodliness* in the land; and we shall make no real impression upon this without singleness of heart. What we want is *more thoughtful and more earnest preaching*. This only will unite our people—not to find fault with Methodism and with us, but to save sinners. In order to do this, we must ourselves be holier and happier and more spiritually minded. ‘Restore unto me the joy of *Thy salvation*, and uphold me with *Thy free Spirit*; then will I teach transgressors *Thy way*, and sinners shall be converted unto Thee.’”

This speech, as might be well supposed, produced a powerful effect upon the Conference. Mr. West was requested to throw the substance of it into the form of a series of resolutions.

The sentences of this speech were sparks struck out in a white heat of conviction. It was more than a reply to a speech ; it was an appeal or after-clap to a sermon preached by him in the Conference chapel on the Sunday morning before the Conference, from "His heart trembled for the Ark of God." In this memorable discourse he lifted up a solemn voice of warning, with all the gravity of a prophetic messenger, yet all the simple modesty of a truth-reporting child. He showed that "the Ark of God," which was the source and secret of our strength and the shrine of present Deity, was the revealed truth of God in His Holy Word, verified in the hearts and witnessed to by the lives and voices of His people ; and the two great perils to which our Church was even now exposed were : (1) The filling up our Church and weakening our strength with adherents far less bound to us by spiritual affinities than by natural relationship. He showed to what an extent the destinies of Methodism were in the hands of ministers' children and the children of our leading people. (2) The temptation to hurry off the Ark of God with boastful shoutings into the battlefield of politics. The sermon itself was, in great part, an amplification of the Pastoral Address which he had prepared the year before, which had won the admiration of such men as Jabez Bunting and Joseph Fowler. It has as clear and strong a voice, and full as timely, for the Methodists of 1897 as for those of 1847.

It is to be noted that the able minister who was the first to broach in Conference the idea of an alternative or a bifurcated membership in English Methodism was, twenty years later, the most determined antagonist and denouncer of them when set forth by the misty metaphysic of the late Rev. Thomas Hughes.

On the report of the *Education Committee*, a discussion took place about receiving Government money in common with Roman Catholics.

Dr. Beaumont contended that the money was received for teaching Popery.

Mr. Scott denied this.

Mr. G. Osborn reaffirmed it.

Mr. W. Bunting spoke, by way of rejoinder, as to the unsound though ingenious and argumentatively evasive position that we took.

Dr. Bunting : " The state of the case is this : *Ultra Dissenters* say that all State-aided education should be secular ; the country says : ' We cannot recognise any system as education of which the Christian religion does not form an essential part ; we have not an absolute right to say that Roman Catholics shall use our authorised version, or to say that Roman Catholic

schools are too bad to be dealt with like others. We have gained a national recognition of the principle that the Scriptures and the doctrines of our religion shall be an essential part of British education, and that no Popish priest can be a master in these schools!'"

Mr. G. Osborn argued against the expenditure of £30,000 in the erection of a Normal School. The debate was adjourned.

At the adjourned debate next day it was announced that the annual expenditure of the Normal School would be £5,015. Mr. Osborn's amendment for delay was lost, and the motion for proceeding with the building carried by a large majority.

The Pastoral Address was read by Mr. Barrett, and warmly eulogised by Dr. Hannah, and *justly*. But "some allusions to Church and State are to be changed."

Mr. Dunn complained that the Book Steward had refused to sell a book of his which had the Steward's own name upon its title-page, on account of an exceptionable paragraph. A long discussion followed, and some angry feeling was excited. Conference adjourned at 2 p.m. under great excitement. The debate was resumed at the evening session, but terminated quietly in an affectionate vote of thanks to the Book Steward.

A memorial from Lambeth was declined, having been printed in a newspaper.

Dr. Dixon being called on to give his report of his representativeship to Canada and the United States, he was found to have gone home in indignation that such an important matter had not been attended to at an earlier stage—a grievous disappointment to the Conference.

The most excited scene took place on the recurrence of a motion for a *special* vote of thanks to Dr. Bunting.

Dr. Beaumont objected: "That's your error; that's your misfortune; that's the misfortune of Methodism, that you are always moving special votes of thanks to Dr. Bunting."

At this our former colleague, Mr. Barton, threw down his pen as Sub-Secretary and rose up in his place on the platform, in impassioned protest against "this unbearable attack on Dr. Bunting."

Dr. Beaumont, who never interrupted his own interrupters, paused, winking with phenomenal rapidity, as he always did on such occasions, and abode his *setting down* in perfect silence. But when our friend had delivered his charge, Beaumont turned round upon his pursuer and "with the hinder end of the spear smote him under the fifth rib." He then repeated, with still more impetuous head-shake and hair-toss: "That's your error, etc." Thereon another stalwart combatant swung back the door of his pew and rushed into the aisle, and vociferously denounced again

this insufferable insult to the majesty of Conference. He was "a proper man," some inches taller than the fighter he encountered, but Beaumont raised himself upon his tiptoes, and poised himself upon his finger-tips, and peered across the chapel as if to verify the identity of his opponent, and gave him such a *douse* of satire as sent him to his seat in ignominious silence. Then for the third time, and with threefold emphasis, did the irrepressible debater pronounce his declaration. I never heard anything to approach it for immediateness and irresistibility, except a reply by Dr. Bunting himself to Dr. Beaumont at a London District Meeting, and certainly never anything to surpass it but Professor Huxley's terrible retort to Bishop Wilberforce of Oxford at the British Association of 1860. Nothing could justify it but the rudeness, the disorderliness, and the frequency of these blustering interruptions.

Mr. G. Osborn and Mr. W. Griffith once more stood shoulder to shoulder in opposition to the Education Committee in London, but Mr. Griffith withdrew his motion, whilst Mr. Osborn pushed his to a division, after a strong speech.

Mr. Fowler notes: "A more than ordinary *ransacking* about missions; and other questions to be asked when the Mission House Report is given." This *ransacking* began in the Missionary Committee of Review by a question from Mr. John Sharpley, of Louth, as to the meaning of a paradoxical item in the accounts. For some time the Secretaries themselves were strangely at a loss, and an uncomfortable silence pervaded the assembly, which was too large to meet anywhere but in the chapel. At last it turned out to be but a peculiar mode of grouping diverse items of expenditure under one inclusive heading. Mr. Sharpley expressed himself as perfectly satisfied and glad to have been the humble instrument in eliciting the explanation of what had puzzled other business men as much as it had himself. But this wholesome exercise of the right of search and scrutiny in a *Committee of Review* was warmly resented by certain of the brethren. I happened to be sitting next to David Hay when a London minister came fuming up to him and said stormily: "Why can't you keep that relative of yours in something like order?"

One of the shrewdest questioners in the *Conference* itself was Mr. G. Osborn, who was evidently on the alert to let nothing slip. Mr. P. Duncan gave some "wise suggestions," derived from his own experience on the mission field. Mr.



W. M. Bunting relieved the tension of debate by sudden spurts of daring humour—*e.g.* "I believe Methodism will subsist till the Millennium, despite all its agitations and revivals; and we are not at the Millennium just yet." Dr. Bunting was throughout the Conference the venerable type of quiet dignity and of patriarchal wisdom and authority. He was evidently in a subdued and gentle mood. He was entering on his ministerial jubilee, and breathed a meek and gracious spirit. Yet as he sat in the front of the platform one could not but discern in that calm, commanding countenance the lines of strenuous and determined warfare. Again and again I said to myself while gazing on him: "An old lion; who shall stir him up?" Under Dr. Beaumont's strictures the working of his facial muscles told plainly of severe and steadfast self-suppression. His *staying power* was wonderful. I noticed that during the long and sometimes weary hours of Conference Mr. Fowler only left the platform once in the sixteen days of session; Dr. Bunting not even once.

Samuel Dunn seemed so propitiated by the large vote for his election into the Hundred that he scarcely spoke at all, except about his own grievance with the Book Room.

The Conference closed on Friday, August 9th, to all appearance in the most peaceful, loving, hopeful state. Dr. Newton, as he took up the hymn-book at the close of the fourth Conference over which he had presided—he too having entered now his ministerial jubilee—was strongly moved, as by some heavenly afflatus. I never heard that noblest of all human voices roll out such tones of majesty as he gave out the parting hymn:—

"Blest be the *dear, uniting love*  
That will not let us part!  
Our bodies may far off remove,  
*We still are one in heart.*

"Joined in one spirit to our Head,  
Where He appoints we go,  
And still in Jesu's footsteps tread,  
And spread His praise below.

"Partakers of the Saviour's grace,  
The same in mind and heart,  
Nor joy, nor grief, nor time, nor place,  
Nor life, nor death, can part."

After prayer, led by Samuel Jackson and Dr. Bunting in the true old Methodist style and spirit, and the gracious

benediction from the President, the Conference broke up, to all seeming in perfect brotherly heartiness and harmony. No one thought that the next Conference would bring the crash. My own feeling was "Lo! the winter is past, the rain is over and gone, the flowers appear on the earth; the fig tree ripeneth her green figs and the vines are in blossom, and give forth their fragrance." But the eager, restless spirits on both sides had determined otherwise. Alas! that a few turbulent and turbid natures should have it in their power to desolate the heritage of God!

## CHAPTER VIII.

### THE FLY SHEETS AND THE PAPER WAR OF 1848-49.

As is well known, the deplorable disruption of 1849 began with the expulsion of three ministers suspected of connection with certain publications called *Fly Sheets*. The first of these appeared in 1845, the fourth and last in 1848. For fear that the impression of them left upon my mind and heart some half-century ago might not be altogether just, I have carefully perused them with reference to this writing.

In the first place, then, they are, as self-described, *Fly Sheets*, not even pamphlets or tracts, or papers in, or letters to, a newspaper, but just sheets—loose, off-hand scribblements, more like electioneering squibs than any other kind of writing. They were, moreover, *Fly Sheets* with no more real solidity or substance than a paper kite. Their author in his private journal calls them "circulars." They were not sold but sent by post to Wesleyan Methodist ministers only. They were veritable *Fly Sheets*, silently depositing their eggs in the scanty larder of every Preacher's house throughout the land. Though they bore topical headings, such as Location, they were made up mainly of the most bitter personalities. They might almost be regarded as one protracted personality—the subject being Dr. Bunting. They are avowedly aimed at "men in office," all of whom are represented as the creatures of the gigantic Jabez Bunting.

The first thing to strike a reader who is in a position to know the facts of the case is their recklessness of statement, inevitably resulting in untruthfulness and misrepresentation, most mischief-making and unfair. For example, the preaching of the ministers who were located as departmental officers is branded as "insipid" and "vapid" (p. 9); the fact being that the discourses of such men as Dr. Bunting, T. Jackson, and J. Farrar, not to mention others, were models of Methodist

preaching, and, as compared with those of their detractor, were full of sap and substance, and were delivered with a spiritual fervour, energy, and directness in most striking contrast with his own controversial, hard, dogmatic tone. His calculations as to the salaries of the Missionary Secretaries, again, though manipulated with adroit audacity, present no approximation to the dubiousness of his own financial position, when driving a remunerative business in the heart of one of our great trade centres, and yet drawing money from our charitable funds as a worn-out minister ; or, from his snug retreat in York, receiving allowances from the same funds, on the same plea of wornoutness, and yet, *by his own account*, undergoing as a popular orator far more exposure and exertion than would be required by Circuit work.

He is obliged to admit that the location of departmental officers in Methodism is very ancient, the founder himself having set the first example of this evil—and that with regard to the Book Room it is an absolute necessity ; but he most unjustly charges the benevolent, genial, and kind-hearted Book Steward of the time with “tyranny.” His administration was the reverse of this description.

The next point of attack is *Centralisation*. This he admits to be the natural result of the location of departments in London, the centre of national activity and force. But the creation of all these departments since the date of the Book Room he attributes to the “scheming ambition of the insatiable Dr. Bunting.” He would have us all believe that they were made to be berths for himself and his adherents, and that their precipitation or delay was his contrivance. As if their initiation were determined by the chronology of his convenience !

But it were as bootless as painful to commit oneself any further to the characterisation of these irritating sheets. Enough to say, every “flying roll” carried with it a malign influence into every house to which the postman brought it. The qualities which should be most carefully excluded from all Christian controversy were here in an intensified degree, while those which should preside over all Church discussions were most jealously excluded. The worst construction was put upon the acts of godly, noble men. The most natural sequences were ascribed to the “scheming cunning” of a Satanic statesmanship ; the most harmless and even honourable acts were attributed to the meanest motives.

Of course, as Mr. Osborn said, there were points in the *Fly Sheets* with which a loyal Methodist might blamelessly agree. The one he named—the re-election of the same man to the Chair of Conference after an interval of eight years—was a far less serious thing than the evils which are apt to cluster around any system of *centralisation*, which was one of Mr. Everett's primal objects of attack. Congestion in a great religious body is as dangerous and as easily brought about as in the natural body, even when in high-toned health. The pinch of the great practical problem is, How to secure the highest efficiency of administration along with the freest distribution and the widest diffusion of official function and responsibility. But here, as everywhere, the *Fly Sheets* spoil by rancorous exaggeration what might otherwise have been a wholesome caveat.

Take such a paragraph as that headed *Insincerity*, and beginning: "A system of trickery and low cunning is preached to keep men in office."

The later *Fly Sheets* are made up of miscellaneous gossip and low, ill-natured grumbling.

On reading these productions after the lapse of half a century, I am brought completely round to the conviction of my two Superintendents of the time, Mr. Fowler and Dr. Beaumont, that the one dignified, judicious course for Conference would have been to leave them utterly unnoticed.

We have seen that at the close of the Conference of 1848 the Connexional horizon was brightening and clearing. The atmospheric balance seemed about to be restored. But the extreme men on either side resolved it should be otherwise. What they wanted was not settlement and stable equilibrium, but the triumph of the one side and the, if possible, extinction of the other. The one party was resolved at any cost to break up, and not merely keep within its safe and wholesome limits, the predominance of Dr. Bunting and the Metropolitan committees, while the other was as desperately determined to check the tendency to freedom of speech and frankness of inquiry and distribution of influence which was so strikingly made manifest by the election to the Chair of the Conference of such men as Stanley, Atherton, and Samuel Jackson, of Mr. Fowler to the Secretaryship, and of Dr. Beaumont to the Hundred, and by the election to the chairmanship of the London District of Mr. Fowler, though there were four ex-Presidents on the spot, and by

his quasi-designation to the Presidency as the recipient of nearly all the votes for the Chair, after the immensely popular Robert Newton. By all means, and at all hazards, this must be prevented.

It is to be noted, further, that on both sides the leaders in the conflict were mostly laymen, and the contest was to be carried on through the medium of the Press.

It might have been said :

" 'Twas morn, but scarce yon level sun  
Can pierce the war-clouds rolling dun,  
Where furious Frank and fiery Hun,  
Shout in their sulph'rous canopy."

The *Wesleyan Record* and the *Wesleyan Chronicle* soon collapsed, but the *Wesleyan Times* took up the ill-omened parable. A due sedateness was maintained in the *Watchman's* leading articles, but contributions and correspondence were admitted to its columns which too successfully endeavoured to out-Everett Everett in vituperation and abuse. This greatly shocked the refined and self-respecting homes of Methodism. I may give one instance. I was visiting at Gunnersbury, and at breakfast Mr. Farmer handed me the *Watchman*, which had just come in. My eye fell upon one of these evil communications which corrupt good manners, and I instinctively dropped the paper with an involuntary exclamation of disgust, which was so marked as to demand explanation and apology. I therefore handed the paper to Mr. Farmer, asking him what he thought of this, he being a member of the *Watchman* Board. It exceeded far in coarseness and vulgarity anything which had discoloured the *Fly Sheets*. This certainly deserved the epithets applied to the *Fly Sheets*—"slimy and disreputable." It was such as only an essentially coarse-grained nature was capable of producing, and may not be quoted by any writer who respects his readers. Mrs. Farmer said: "That's right, sir, give it him well; we have protested till we are tired." Mr. Farmer answered: "Well, I regret these things as much as you can, and at our meetings I oppose them to the uttermost. I protested against the admission of this very thing, but I was outvoted and overborne."

The fatal 1849 of Methodism opened with a renewal of hostilities on either side. Scarcely had the New Year's chimes rung out :—

" Peace and goodwill, goodwill and peace ;  
Peace and goodwill to all mankind " ;

scarcely had the echoes of the New Year's hymn died away—

“ His adorable will let us gladly fulfil,  
And our talents improve,  
By the patience of hope and the labour of love ”;

when the war-whoop of both parties startled the Connexion in the midst of special services and sermons to the young.

“ Loudly the pibroch did sound forth from Fleet Street,  
And calm City Road to the slogan replied.”

For it had now become a bitter party contest. On January 1st appeared the first numbers of *Papers on Wesleyan Matters*. On January 8th came out the first number of the *Wesleyan Times*.

Of the *Papers on Wesleyan Matters*, Dr. George Smith says (“ Hist. of Methodism,” vol. iii., p. 462) in an apologetic paragraph :—

“ Unfortunately these generally able papers were also anonymous, a circumstance which gave their opponents an advantage which they used to the utmost. Another and more serious defect was the intemperate language occasionally employed. Irritated by the unfounded aspersions of the *Fly Sheets*, the writers of these papers retorted in no measured terms upon their opponents, and, it is feared, they only aggravated the evils they were intended to remove.”

But the worst was that they were far from being content with retorting on opponents; they made utterly unprovoked and most unscrupulous attacks upon honourable and highly honoured men who were in no sense their opponents, unless to be the opponents of repression, impudence, and confusion were to be their natural and intolerable foes. It too soon became apparent that one of the, if not *the*, most prominent objects of the papers was to keep out of the Chair of the Conference the eminent, exemplary, and most devoted Methodist minister who, in the ordinary sequence of affairs, and but for the desperate manœuvres of the papers party, would unquestionably have filled it with exceptional ability, dignity, moderation, and prudence—qualities which most urgently and obviously were needed at the time. We have seen that, but for the octennial recurrence of the Presidency of Dr. Newton, Mr. Fowler would, in 1848, have followed in the Chair Jacob Stanley, William Atherton, and Samuel Jackson. But another President from that side of the house would in no wise suit the policy of the lay partisans of the

other. Not that it was altogether and only a party irritation ; an honest and honourable indignation blended with it. Yet the *Fly Sheets* blizzard might have blown over with comparatively little mischief but for an incident by which it was indefinitely intensified and prolonged. A young minister stationed in the city in which Mr. Everett resided had, while waiting for his Superintendent (Mr. D. Walton) in his study, picked up an MS. which was lying on the desk, in which he recognised a passage he had read in the *Fly Sheets*. He kept his secret for some months, but at last disclosed it to Mr. T. P. Bunting in a private conversation whilst staying at his house. Now Mr. Bunting, not unnaturally, was grieved and wroth almost beyond endurance by the sneaking and yet savage onslaughts which had been made upon his venerable, noble father, and felt goaded like the classic hero, to detect the perpetrator. Now this same Superintendent was known to be a close, fast friend of Mr. Everett, and to have been deeply soured and sored by the rejection of a work of his by the Book Committee, at Dr. Bunting's instance, after it had been accepted and he had been, by request of the committee, put to the trouble of writing an additional chapter. Mr. Bunting followed the trail of the MS. by demanding an investigation before a Minor District Meeting. As the "Life of Dr. Bunting" says : "The proceedings in this case helped in several ways to bring things to a crisis"—and to a crash. Those proceedings came out in the Conference Report. One of these ways was the starting of the *Papers on Wesleyan Matters*. It was resolved by their promoters to try their own hand at "unfounded aspersions," sly insinuations, and anonymous personalities.

With a subtlety which Everett himself might envy, they put their innuendoes into the form of questions, right and left, so as to make their obvious object of attack the very symbol of defectiveness in all the gifts essential to a President and the embodiment of every rare disqualification for that arduous office. Thus : "Does he encourage the societies?" etc.; or "Does he speak disparagingly of parts of the system and of the more public men in Methodism?" "Does he employ the office with which he is entrusted by the Conference to the ends of a selfish and masterful disposition, and by force rather than by reason and by New Testament principles carry his measures in the meetings where he may preside?" "As a member of committee, does he attend chiefly when there is some party object to be gained, or for the purpose of presenting obstructive



and crotchety objections?" "Does he set himself to trouble and annoy them by raising endless objections to whatever may be proposed?" "Does he seek to make the Conference the arena of debate after the manner of a political association, rather than an opportunity of conferring together?" etc.

Such was the light in which Mr. Fowler's faithful, frank, and fearless execution of his duty as a member of committee and of Conference was attempted to be placed by men who stood forth as the anonymous denouncers of misconstruction and anonymous attacks on character. The ill-favoured features of the *Fly Sheets* were here reflected; "evil surmisings" and the deep mark of unsound membership in the Church of Christ; "they are not afraid to speak evil of dignities." The writers themselves confessed that in resorting to this style of writing, and even in "taking it on themselves to lay down for the guidance of Conference oracular suggestions as to the qualifications of the individual to be elected as its President," they were infringing the patent of the *Fly Sheets* and the *Wesleyan Chronicle*, which had been followed by the *Watchman*. They admit until within the last few years "*parties have had the decency to abstain from any public agitation in the matter; have at all events avoided premature and impertinent dictation.*" The example of this innovation on propriety was first set by the editors of the *Fly Sheets* and the *Wesleyan Chronicle*, and how did the editor of the *Papers* justify this following a couple of editors to do evil? To show that it was a game at which two parties might play. Surely not the party which had condemned the game as utterly un-Christian and dishonest!

This flattering and too successful mimicry of the *Fly Sheets*, of course, both saddened and shocked all Methodists who were not committed partisans. Hence at the first Book Committee, after the appearance of this article, attention was called to it by two distinguished members of the meeting. Dr. Bunting, having doubtless received intimation that the matter would come up, did not attend the meeting. Mr. ex-President Atherton moved and Mr. W. M. Bunting seconded a resolution to the following effect: "That this meeting is surprised and pained to find that certain publications, entitled *Papers on Wesleyan Matters*, containing most injurious and unfounded reflections on the character of an honoured minister, a member of this meeting, and other highly objectionable matters, are exposed for sale upon the Book Room premises,

and is decidedly of opinion that the Book Steward ought not to facilitate in any way the circulation of that serial." This was carried. I dined with Mr. W. M. Bunting at the close of the discussion, and he was evidently much relieved by this decision.

But the promoters of the Papers looked at the matter from a very different point of view. So they bent their care during the interval between the two monthly meetings to secure the rescinding of the resolution. In this they were successful. At the next meeting (at which, too, I was present) a member rose with great solemnity and made the startling announcement, for a meeting composed entirely of Christian ministers, that he was actually about to propose a resolution "*in the fear of God!*" When a devout man, whom no one thinks of supposing capable of performing any deliberate action otherwise than in the fear of God, feels it necessary to preface a proposal by any such asseveration, one may be sure that he feels no slight misgiving, no gentle "gird of conscience," as to what he is about to move. The motion was: "The rescinding of the resolution of the last committee with regard to the *Papers on Wesleyan Matters*." This was seconded. In neither speech was there the slightest effort to deny the untruthfulness of the anonymous charges brought against the Secretary of the Conference and Chairman of the District, with the avowed purpose of blocking his way to the Chair of Conference. All that was pleaded was that, however wrong it was in itself, it was done by "loyal Methodists" in the interests of "Methodism as it is." The key-question in the string of criminating interrogations put with regard to Mr. Fowler was this: "In his behaviour in the Conference and in General Committee, is it quite clear that he loves *Methodism as it is?*" for this was meant to designate a certain party in "the politics of Methodism." The mover and seconder both argued that it would be a great pity, and would indeed "do harm," to blame strongly anything that was done by "our friends."

These speeches roused to an almost savage indignation the sarcastic honesty of William Atherton. He rose to his full height and said: "Brother — *proposes* this in *the fear of God*, and I *oppose* it in *the dread of the devil*. Brother — has made a *very elegant and shining Wellington boot for the cloven foot*." He then with a gigantic grip stripped off the boot and laid bare the foot. He showed that by rescinding

last month's resolution we should turn the laugh against ourselves by convicting ourselves before both sides and the public generally of a grotesque hypocrisy. He showed that, by adopting the method of anonymous attacks on character and motives, we were, in reality, making to the enemy a gratuitous donation of our heaviest artillery.

Mr. W. M. Bunting followed in a tone of sober sadness. All the piquancy which lent such a charm to his ordinary speeches was completely laid aside. He pronounced the attack on Mr. Fowler "to be worse than anything in the *Fly Sheets*." In all their slanders they did pick up some semblance or some fragment of a fact on which to fasten their morbid incrustations. But these insinuations against Mr. Fowler he declared to be the sheerest fabrications, not only without basis, but, in fact, the very reverse of the features of the actual Joseph Fowler whom they pretended to portray. He alluded to the public unseemliness of presenting for sale in the windows of our Book Establishment a distorted and discoloured picture of the senior minister of City Road Chapel, the Chairman of the London District and Secretary of the Conference, and most distinguished member of the Book Committee, and that within a few yards of his own residence—Wesley's House—and of the venerable sanctuary of which he was by appointment of the Conference in special charge. Mr. W. Bunting was sure that every member of the meeting who had, like himself, enjoyed the privilege of serving under Mr. Fowler's Superintendency "as a son in the Gospel" would bear hearty witness to the fact that he was the very opposite of the imaginary sketch presented in these Papers. He hoped that the committee would not allow itself to be induced to throw away the honour it had done itself at its last meeting, and to brand itself with the dishonour of patronising and propagating the very vices it condemned in others.

Yet, despite the powerful speeches of these mighty men, the members, who had been beaten up for the occasion, voted according to their previous purpose and, as it would seem, their pledge, and the rescinding was carried by a majority of two.

Thereupon stout old William Atherton, "like a man in wrath, rose up and answered": "Well, have I then lived to learn that slander and detraction and unprovoked, ill-natured untruth are only wrong when resorted to by the opposite side?"

No speaker ventured to expose himself to ridicule by the flimsy pretext hastily thrown up in the April number of the Papers—namely, that their attack upon a worthy and distinguished minister had been made without the mention of the name. This double anonymity was recognised as an aggravation of the cunning and unscrupulousness of the masked assault. This was one of its characteristics which moved Mr. W. M. Bunting to describe it as worse than the *Fly Sheets*, inasmuch as it found a lower depth of trickery than the *Fly Sheets* themselves. It was well known that Mr. Fowler had at the foregoing Conference received more than sixteen times as many votes as any other man but Dr. Newton. This shambling subterfuge was started in an article entitled, *The President of the Conference and Anonymous Writing*, and it was followed by still further imputations on “the badgered worthy,” such as that he was “one of those who abuse inferior offices to the annoyance and injury of their colleagues”; of having actually gone so far as to say what the Conference itself has said repeatedly; with other eager and factitious criminations. This is followed by a defence of anonymous incriminations, “if only what you say is true.”

It was characteristic of Mr. Fowler that he invited the seconder of the resolution to dine with him at the close of the meeting. I had the honour of being invited to join them, and could not but admire the equanimity and magnanimity of Mr. Fowler in ignoring altogether the whole unpleasant business.

These discussions in the Book Committee were, however, not without effect. The promoters of the Papers found that they had placed themselves in a very false position. They had taken the wind out of their own sails, and they had turned into farcical grimace their uplifted eyes and hands of holy horror at anonymous assaults upon ministerial character and reputation. In a comparatively subdued paper they announced the discontinuance of their agitating serial “for the present,” apologising only for anything that had been written too severely, yet maintaining that “our object appeared to us to justify and even call for what we have done.” This was the self-same ground assumed by the author of the *Fly Sheets* in vindication of the like ignoble practices.

Dr. George Smith’s “fear” with regard to these ill-judged, these irritating Papers was too surely verified; they only aggravated the evils they were intended to remove. They gave a strong party colour to the contest. The attack on Mr. Fowler

was recognised, and by thousands resented, as an attack on frank inquiry and open animadversion in committee and in Conference, in the person of the man who, since the death of Mr. Galland, had been looked upon as the standard-bearer of a constitutional and law-abiding independence.

But the parable dropped so suddenly by the Papers was all the more vigorously taken up by the *Watchman*. Its very able, fresh young Editor, of course, took his brief and his instructions from the proprietary from whom he drew his stipend: his business was to supply the style and special pleading. And he did this in a right scholarly and knightly way. He advocated the nominee of his proprietary against the inestimable minister who had been blackballed by the *Papers on Wesleyan Matters*. It was pleaded that the next President must have been in the Chair before; these were times when ex-Presidents must have a prior claim, and re-election must be taken as the order of the day. The type necessary for a whole leading article was employed in putting forth the simple name of Thomas Jackson, which was writ as large as if printed in the type of the title.

Another way in which these Papers aggravated the evil was by calling forth the publication of the *Fly Sheets* as a bound volume, with the publisher's name on the title-page, under the name of "The Fly Sheets Vindicated," so that, as Dr. Bunting said in Conference: "They were not now *Fly Sheets* circulated privately; they were published in a 'vindicator.'" The charges were now in the hands of the people. This was a monster mischief. Up to this time the *Fly Sheets* had been all but unknown to the Methodist people. I had never seen a copy outside a minister's house in any one of my three large circuits, the Second London, the Third London, and Hull; but now they came forth into open daylight expressly in answer to *Papers on Wesleyan Matters* and other anonymous publications.

Another great disservice done by the adoption of the *Fly Sheets'* bush-fighting policy was to afford the *Wesleyan Times* the very thing it wanted—a good spurt at starting.

## CHAPTER IX.

### THE CONFERENCE OF 1849.

HAPPILY for us, the conversations in the Conference of 1849 and its preliminary committees do not come within our scope. They were amply published at the time in various journals, and were compiled, printed, and published immediately afterwards in a shilling pamphlet, under the title "Companion to the Minutes." Moreover, Mr. Fowler was not able to attend the Conference at all. Some two years before, he had come up from Hull to London to attend a very important Connexional Committee which had been appointed at his instance. In his characteristic anxiety to be present at the meeting to the last, and yet to take the earliest possible train back to his Circuit and his home, he had hazardedly travelled by night. The result was that by the time he had got halfway homeward he was seriously ill, and reached his destination in a critical condition. Through the blessing of God upon the skill of Drs. Sandwith and Hardy, and on an exceptional vitality preserved by unbroken regularity of habit, he had thoroughly recovered, and resumed and maintained his exemplary habits of pastoral assiduity and energy. But he had been appointed to accompany the President to the Irish Conference at Cork, and the lateness of the Irish services were very trying to his conscientious regularity. Irish Methodism, through the famine and the consequent exodus and the disloyal agitation, was in a deplorable plight; moreover, it had on hand a heavy educational undertaking. Cholera had come close upon the heels of famine. The country was likened by one of the ministers to a battlefield after the carnage.

Mr. Fowler had calculated on a brief interval between the Irish Conference and the pre-Conferential committees in England to collect his thoughts and papers, and to see that the First London Circuit was in a state to be left. So he had left behind him, locked up carefully, memoranda which were indispensable to

him as Chairman of the London District. But he was kept so long in Cork that, not being able to make straight for Manchester, he was obliged to go round by London for his papers and yet not spend a night at home; he lost two nights' rest, and this, with the continuous and unaccustomed shaking, brought on a recurrence of the former mischief. He was able to take part in only one committee. He contented himself with supporting the opinion of Mr. P. McOwan and Mr. W. Stamp that the union of the Chapel Fund with the Education Fund was detrimental to both. This union he had opposed from the beginning in foresight of its injurious working, and the fact that there was now a less sum to divide between the two funds than was aforetime raised for the Chapel Fund alone. He was then completely prostrated by a dangerous attack of the gravest character. As he was thus totally disabled from attending the Conference, his friend Mr. West undertook to do what he could towards filling the hiatus which would thus be made in Mr. Fowler's Journal. But, in Conference, matters took at once so serious a turn that Mr. West was only able to record part of the proceedings.

The speech of Mr. Osborn on his election into the Hundred now lies before me in what may most truthfully be termed the caligraphy of Mr. West; for if ever a man's handwriting was a manifestation of his character, it was the penmanship of Francis West, clear, firm, round, and incapable of being misread. Surely never was so militant a manifesto put forth in acknowledgment of an election into the Legal Conference as was that of Mr. Osborn. This tone was taken up by a reference in Dr. Beaumont's renomination of Mr. Dunn for the same honour.

Mr. Osborn spoke of men who circulated slanders against their brethren which they dared not put their names to. "If these men are indeed brethren, let the Conference take care to rebuke them. If we allow without rebuke a practical Antinomianism to prevail amongst us which slanders the men whom we delight to honour, that is a course which I regard as opposed to the law of God. If the usefulness of Methodism is to be continued, we must have a sound morality. For that I am determined to struggle till I get a satisfactory solution of the great question that is now before us. We must 'cast out the scorner and strife will cease.' A Test Act is no new thing."

Of course the absence of Mr. Fowler settled the question of the Presidency. Mr. Jackson's speech from the Chair was in the same belligerent tone as that of Mr. Osborn. It was plain that the suggestion of the *Watchman* as to what should be the chief

part of the Agenda—as Mr. Osborn put it, “*the question now before the Conference*”—was “how to cast out the scorner.” The recommendation sent up by the *Watchman*—the application of the “brotherly question”—was evidently the course resolved upon. The opening Presidential speech, as reported in the *Watchman*, sent forth the like sharp bugle blast.

It had been sought to bring the characters of ministers of the Gospel into disrespect and contempt. This evil must be dealt with, done away with. We must not tolerate this evil. We ought to put an end to it in the spirit of pity to the offender. I never witnessed so kind a feeling. It must be cheering to everyone. May the Lord gird us afresh, each with “his hands to war and his fingers to fight.”

The thanks to the retiring Secretary, Mr. Fowler, were accompanied by a letter of fraternal sympathy with the affliction which precluded his attendance.

Mr. I. Keeling said: “We all know Mr. Fowler’s characteristic vigour, which had been thrown into his official duties.” He suggested that Mr. Fowler’s anxious attentions to the business of the Irish Conference and to the earlier committees might be connected with his present affliction.

Mr. W. M. Bunting: “I have known Mr. Fowler during twenty-five years as a man who has singularly deserved well of the Conference. I think the resolution, doubtless through inadvertence, deficient in this respect.”

The ex-President, in acknowledging his vote of thanks, said: “The time has come when we must take a final stand for the harmony of Methodism. I expect great things from this Conference, by which the spirit of disunion will be quashed.”

Mr. G. Osborn rose and said that after the names were gone through he should make a friendly complaint against Mr. Fielden and several other brethren who were in the same case.

Dr. Beaumont: “I oppose this procedure as a dangerous innovation.”

The President ruled that Mr. Osborn was right.

Dr. Beaumont: “It is unworthy to begin with an aged man pressed down by infirmities. How came Mr. Osborn to pass by the first name on the stations—Joseph Fowler, Secretary of the Conference? Mr. Fowler has not signed Mr. Osborn’s Declaration. Why did not Mr. Osborn wait till he came to the next non-signer’s name, and not swoop down on an infirm old man?”

Mr. Osborn: “I consider Mr. Fowler by his letter to the *Watchman* to have given me brotherly satisfaction.”

Mr. Dunn and Mr. George protested against the injustice of the course taken by Mr. Osborn. Several spoke briefly and interruptedly amidst much excitement.

Mr. W. M. Bunting: “I fear that Mr. Osborn has overstepped the mark. The Conference ought seriously to deliberate whether it will allow Mr. Osborn to put the questions he proposes.”

Dr. Bunting and Mr. W. Smith feared the course proposed would be prejudicial.



Dr. Beaumont: "The plan proposed by Mr. Osborn is a deviation from all order."

In the midst of much confusion and excitement, Mr. Fielden lifted up his right hand, trembling with emotion and paralysis, and said: "This hand for years has not been able to write."

Mr. Osborn: "Mr. Fielden has given me perfect satisfaction." It was late and the President closed the sitting.

The next morning the President prefaced the proceedings by saying:—

"The proceedings of last evening have made me very anxious as to the best course to be pursued. Two years ago Conference gave permission to circulate a declaration expressive of unabated confidence in each other. A few have not signed this. The non-signers are not in the first instance to be thought disloyal, as they might have sufficient reason for not signing. I know one instance of a senior minister who has not signed. The whole subject of the *Fly Sheets* and the Declaration must come before the Conference. It will be better to waive the cases of the non-signers till the whole case comes up. The Sabbath is at hand, and also the solemn services connected with the ordination. This makes it very desirable to avoid all irritating topics. I have spent an anxious night."

Dr. Bunting: "We were last night from good motives betrayed into an inadvertence. Members of Conference should not be in haste to make motions. In difficult cases, before making motions it would be proper to consult the President. It is not pleasant to grieve a man who endeavours to do good to the Body by resisting any motion he brought forward."

When Dr. Bunting's name was reached, he said: "It may be a painful thing at my time of life to be put upon my trial, but I will submit to the humiliation if my accusers will show themselves. Are there any *Wesleyan Times* men in the house? Let them come forth. Here I am to meet them."

The President: "In the name of the Conference, if there be any in the house, I command them to stand forth." He repeated this with great energy and emphasis, after allowing a pause for Dr. Bunting's accusers to stand forth.

Mr. Scott then rose and began to defend Dr. Bunting against "the absurd, most unbelievable, and unbelievably insinuations cast upon him."

Mr. W. M. Bunting: "I object to this course of remark. My father is not accused, and therefore needs not to be defended."

When the Secretary, Dr. Hannah, read his own name, it was Dr. Beaumont's turn to rise.

He said: "I have been slandered in the *Watchman* and in an anonymous pamphlet written under the fictitious signature of 'Vates.' I did not consider it consistent with self-respect to take any notice of the slander till Dr. Hannah, by giving it a recommendation, made the pamphlet no longer anonymous. But for Dr. Hannah's name, thus attached, it would have received no notice from me. I am indifferent about the pamphlet and the pamphleteer. I have to do with Dr. Hannah's name attached to it, as advertised on the wrapper of the *Wesleyan Methodist Magazine*. I have always

respected Dr. Hannah's high intellect and his higher moral and official rectitude, but when I find myself damaged in my sphere of usefulness by the authority of Dr. Hannah's name, the Secretary must forgive me for saying that he has done me wrong, as he has put no caveat whatever to his recommendation, but writes as if he approved of the whole pamphlet. Dr. Hannah has endorsed the slanderous publication signed 'Vates.' "

The Secretary explained that he only intended to express his commendation of the argument of the pamphlet. He cast himself on the judgment of the Conference. He had a grave sense of the evil of slander.

Dr. Beaumont: "I give Dr. Hannah full credit for not intending to injure me; but in his eagerness to serve some he has gravely injured others. It is murderous, to my thinking, to have such slanders issued. I, however, accept the explanation so far—that the Secretary had no intention to injure me."

Mr. G. Osborn spoke in extenuation of the anonymous pamphlet recommended by the Secretary, contrasting it with the *Fly Sheets*, which he distinctly attributed to "*Dr. Beaumont's party and friends.*" Here a scene of great confusion ensued. Dr. Beaumont, Mr. George, and Mr. Scott appealed to the Chair whether Mr. Osborn was in order. The President ruled that Mr. Osborn was in order, adding: "Is it disorderly to speak of Dr. Beaumont's party? Do not the writers of the *Fly Sheets* and in the *Wesleyan Times* constantly put him forward as the leader of the Opposition in the Conference?" Cries of "No, no!" "Yes, yes!" "Order, order!" "Chair, Chair!" "Question!" and great confusion. At length the President obtained silence and ruled: "Mr. Osborn's words are *capable* of a sense not injurious to Dr. Beaumont. Mr. Osborn must be allowed to proceed."

Mr. Osborn: "I do not wish to use the words offensively, but I must say that there are some among us whose intention it is to subvert Methodism."

Mr. Dunn rose to order and asked what right Mr. Osborn had to give his own unbrotherly version to the intentions of Dr. Beaumont and the other non-signers. The confusion increasing, the President observed: "Hitherto, amidst much that is exciting, the Conference has shown its good sense by the order maintained. The effect produced upon our own minds by this loud clamour is not good."

Dr. Bunting: "The Conference has by this confusion virtually deposed the President."

Mr. G. Osborn resumed and persisted in reaffirming his allegation against Dr. Beaumont.

Dr. Beaumont: "I protest against this line of conduct as most unfair. If Mr. Osborn had anything against me, it should have been stated when my name was called."

Mr. George: "I also protest against the insinuations of Mr. Osborn, that brethren—because they did not sign this declaration—are to be considered as desirous of subverting Methodism."

The President: "I rule that the matter shall now drop."

Mr. Stephen Kay requested a hearing for the clearing of his own character, but for some time in vain. At last, owing mainly to the entreaties of Mr. W. M. Bunting, he obtained it. He said that a correspondence had taken place between himself and Dr. Hannah respecting an insinuation in the pamphlet recommended by Dr. Hannah, that the chapter in the *Fly Sheet* on missionary expenditure quoted *Stephen Kay*. He, too, would not have

noticed the masked "Vates" but for the name of Dr. Hannah attached to it. He added: "No returned missionary is capable of writing that paper in the name of a returned missionary. I call upon the man in the mask—*Vates*. Is he in the house? Dr. Hannah refuses to give his name; let him throw off his mask."

The President: "I think it would be a relief both to mind and body to sing a few verses." He then gave out:

"O, let us take a softer mould,  
Blended and gathered into Thee."

Thus closed the Saturday session of this first week of Conference. With the exception of that concluding stave, how did it justify the premonitions of the gentle William Bunting of its unfitness as a preparation for the Conference Sunday! No wonder that after that week of stormy days and anxious nights, and after struggling through his Presidential sermon, the strong man's strength gave way. What a contrast he cannot but have felt it to his triumphal service in the same chapel, just ten years before, at the close of his first Presidency in the exultant Centenary year. No wonder that for the next two days he was unable to appear at the Conference, or to take his place at the public examinations of the candidates for ordination on Monday or Tuesday evening.

On resuming the question of "character," the case of Charles Rawlings was brought up, who, in the Macclesfield District Meeting, when inquired of by the chairman: "Do you approve of the *Fly Sheets*?" had answered: "Some things in them are true." The question was deferred till the cases of the non-signers should be dealt with altogether. Next came up the case of Mr. D. Walton, which occupied the rest of the session and the whole of Thursday morning—a full day of Conference.

This meeting had *found* the charges of Mr. T. Percival Bunting to be fully sustained. It recommended that Mr. Walton should be censured from the Chair of the District Meeting and disqualified for the office of Superintendent. He positively refused to answer the questions put to him. When the case came up in Conference Mr. Walton objected to a Missionary Committee, half composed of laymen, being made the occasion of the charge.

Mr. W. M. Bunting: "The character of Mr. Walton, as a Wesleyan Methodist minister, is dearer to me than that of my own beloved and generous-hearted brother. I think my brother acted improperly in bringing forward the matter when and where he did. I believe that Mr. Walton cherishes a chivalrous sentiment of honour. But such a sentiment towards a private friend ought to give way before a similar sentiment towards his calumniated brother."

Mr. Walton solemnly declared that he did not lend the MS. to his friend with any knowledge that it would be employed in the *Fly Sheets*; and he condemned the *Fly Sheets*.

The report of the District Meeting was then adopted, with three dissentients: S. Dunn, W. Griffith, and R. Harrison.

The next case was that of Samuel Dunn. On the 8th of January, 1849, Mr. Dunn followed in the wake of *Papers on Wesleyan Matters* by starting a Wesleyan monthly, with this important difference, that it bore in large letters on its title-page the local habitation and the name of its indefatigable editor—the Rev. Samuel Dunn, Nottingham—and that non-editorial articles bore no pseudonymous signatures, but the honest names or clear initials of the writers. The successive numbers lie before me. The title was *The Wesley Banner and Revival Record*. It opens with a profession of firm attachment and devotion to Wesleyan Methodism. It was avowedly the organ of a minority in the Conference, but purely a “defensive” organ. Its first paragraph declared its *motif* to be: “The Preachers in the minority have had attributed to them the basest motives. Individuals connected with Wesleyan Methodism are putting forth their energies to silence those ministers. They have been denounced in newspapers; and in a periodical—the object of which appears to be to attack all those who dare to speak and act otherwise than the projectors approve—on Wesleyan affairs.” Revivals of religion, catechism classes, Sunday schools, Temperance, etc., were also to be promoted. The first article was a sermon by Dr. Beaumont on “Let brotherly love continue.” A most wholesome homily.

The earliest literary production of Adam Clarke, “*The Renewal of the Covenant*,” is followed by the one polemic fragment of a column, “Reasons for not signing Mr. Osborn’s Declaration.” Then comes an account of the revival at Wednesbury, catechumen classes and Sabbath schools, some spiritual tit-bits, and half a page of small reviews. As the organ of a Conference minority, the *Wesley Banner* certainly does not go beyond the licence of expression with which our present Methodist public is familiarised. Its strongest passages are those which resent the effort to turn a merely *permitted* Declaration into a compulsory Test, and its protests against the anonymous detractions in the *Papers on Wesleyan Matters* and their attempts to connect Revivalism with Radicalism and to mix

the *Banner* up with the *Fly Sheets* and the *Wesleyan Times*. He asks indignantly : "Where do they find in our Papers, as they insinuated, the advocacy of lay delegates?" He says :

"One half of the Papers is taken up with anathematising the *Fly Sheets*, and the other half with *imitating* them. The imitation, however, leaves the original far behind. We defy anyone to find in the *Fly Sheets*, in a similar compass, the same amount of slander as, in discussing the Presidential question, is poured out on one of the most honoured ministers in the Connexion."

The Nottingham and Derby District Meeting preferred charges against the Rev. S. Dunn as Editor of the *Wesley Banner*. The gist of the matter was : "The tendency of this publication is to promote strifes and divisions, and to endanger the peace of our Societies ; that he be required immediately to suspend its publication, and that if he refuses, the whole matter be referred to the Conference."

The Revs. W. Griffith and J. C. George opposed these resolutions on the ground that no evidence has been adduced to show that the *effect* of the *Wesley Banner* has been to disturb the peace of the Society.

The Nottingham and Derby District Meeting showed great candour and, in the circumstances, calm courage by accompanying these resolutions with a "judgment" with regard to the *Papers on Wesleyan Matters* :

"That these anonymous publications are mischievous in their tendency, divisive in their influence, and tend greatly to promote, both among ministers and people, strifes and divisions, and in the present excited state of our Connexion we feel bound, in justice to all parties, and for the interests of the Connexion generally, to say the time is fully come when the Conference should put an end to all such publications, and we call the special attention of the Conference to the periodical called *Papers on Wesleyan Matters*, which we regret to find has been sold and circulated through the Book Room ; papers which, loud in their condemnation of 'anonymous slanders,' are themselves anonymous and contain serious and unjust insinuations and expressions upon the character of several of our ministers, and are calculated not to allay but to gender strifes and divisions in our Connexion. This committee recommends our rule passed in 1793 : 'That no pamphlet or printed letter be circulated without the author's name.' "

Mr. Dunn requested as a favour that, like Mr. Walton, he should have a hearing in the Conference, but the President nominated a committee "before whom Mr. Dunn would be heard."

The Declaratory Laws of 1835 being again read, a long discussion followed ; after which the Secretary said that Mr. Everett was strongly suspected of being the author of the *Fly Sheets*.

Mr. Everett was called forward, and the Secretary read from a paper in his hand the question : " Are you the writer or author of the *Fly Sheets* ? "

Mr. Everett : " Am I the first on the list of those who have not signed the declaration ? When the brethren whose names occur in the Minutes before mine have answered the question, then will I. Why am I singled out from the rest ? "

The Secretary, without answering, persistently pressed the question, till Mr. Everett said : " I demand the name of my accuser, the charge against me in writing, and an opportunity to defend myself in a constitutional way."

After further interlocutions with the Secretary, he positively refused to answer under any other conditions than those already mentioned, saying : " If I am the most suspected, then there must be the most evidence against me ; produce it."

Mr. Everett was desired to retire to his seat. The like course was adopted with regard to Mr. Burdsall, with the like result. Messrs. Everett and Burdsall were requested to withdraw. A long discussion followed, in which, when Dr. Beaumont questioned the course which was being pursued, he was met with such persistent interruption intermingled with hissing that he said : " Since the Conference will not hear me, I will sit down."

Mr. Marsden : " I propose that we postpone coming to a conclusion ; it will be more dignified, and will give us all time for reflection."

Two brethren were deputed to inform the two suspects that another opportunity would be afforded them to reply to the question already put, and others which were yet to come. An hour later the brethren reported that Messrs. E. and B. had received them in a very kind, gentlemanly, and ministerial way, but still declined answering the question already put, or any similar inquiry, except on the conditions they had stated.

The President proposed to defer decision on Messrs. Everett and Burdsall till Monday. " Many eyes are upon the Conference, and the appearance of acting with precipitancy or undue excitement must be avoided." He nominated a strong committee of ex-Presidents and Chairmen to meet in the meantime and consider the case, but added to it three members of the Manchester District Meeting, "because they had been mixed up with the affair from the beginning—the Brethren Naylor, Crowther, and Osborn."

Mr. Dunn : " These men are too much ' mixed up with the affair ' to be fairly members of a judicial committee on the subject."

Mr. W. M. Bunting : " I consider the President's reason for putting these brethren on the committee the strongest possible reason for keeping them out of it. These three men, 'mixed up with the *Fly Sheet* affair from the beginning,' must have a bias of mind in the matter. It will be thought by impartial men a partial deed. I beg that they be not on it."

Dr. Bunting : "And I beg to oppose that. There must be but one President here."

Mr. W. M. Bunting : " The President 'proposed' these names, and thus invited the Conference to support or object." This remark caused great confusion and many outcries, till Dr. Bunting exclaimed : "Hear me, and then cry what you please." It was determined that these three Manchester men should be added to the ex-Presidents and Chairmen.

The President then called on Mr. G. Osborn to address the Conference.

This culminating speech is of no slight historical importance, inasmuch as it in effect decided the course of events, and was an exposition of the underlying ideas of the policy put forth by the party of which Mr. Osborn was, at *that* time, the ministerial representative.

After repeating and expanding his defence of the applying or his "Declaration" as "a test," he asked : "What is the point at issue? It is : Whether Methodism can exist *if the Conference be divided into two parties—a Government and an Opposition party*. The question is vital. If Methodism be divided into two parties, it must come to an end. *Agreement of opinion in public matters* is, with a political party, the one thing needful, but ours is a *confederation based necessarily on personal* and private, not upon public considerations. This principle obtains throughout our system. Every Class leader, every local Preacher, is subject to the same *examination as to his religious experiences*. The union as *believers* lies at the foundation of our Conferential union, and of all our acts and proceedings. The Church of England has *two* considerable *parties*, but *neither of them has the ruling power*; they are governed by the Bishops. We are a Presbyterian body. *The different parties in the Establishment are equally secure of provision*. *Methodism depends upon voluntary liberality*, and if the party denouncing the executive should obtain extensive influence, and confidence should be destroyed, all support must fail."

He contended for freedom of speech in Conference, but maintained that the right of the minority ended there; that it had no right to agitate a question once voted on and passed. "Mr. Osborn sat down amidst volleys of applause."

This speech contained some very sound and salutary principles.

Whether it took due note of all the data necessary to a just judgment on the matter, or warranted the immediate practical deduction drawn by the speaker himself, will best be considered in our general estimate of the whole procedure. Mr. Osborn's peroration was on this wise : "I therefore trust that the Conference will discharge its *duty* by *making inquiry into the views and feeling of those brethren who have neither signed the declaration nor in any other way afforded to their brethren a pledge of confidence.*"

The next non-signing case which came before the Conference was that of Mr. George, a bright, dapper, intelligent, and cultivated brother whom I had been wont to designate as Gentleman George. The position he took up was, at any rate, frank, clear, and well-defined.

"I did not refuse to sign from want of confidence in the fathers of the Connexion. I can vie with Mr. Osborn in my attachment to Methodism. For twenty-five years I have devoted myself to its service, and am willing to devote my whole life." (Cries of "Sign the Declaration; we don't want to hear of your attachment.") "The Declaration came to me, so far as I knew, without any authority. Had it been issued with the names of the President and Secretary of the Conference, I should have treated it differently. I think it exceedingly officious in Mr. Osborn to issue the Declaration a second time. I wish him to exemplify as well as enforce the charity which 'thinketh no evil.'"

The President : "Are you going to set yourself right with the Conference?"

Mr. George : "If I have unwittingly used any improper expression, I retract it. I did not sign the Declaration because I thought the issuing it would not secure peace."

The President : "Another reflection upon the Conference. Had you any participation in the *Fly Sheets*?"

Mr. George : "I have reasons for declining to answer that question, which, with permission, I will state." (Cries of "Yes or No." "We don't want your reasons.")

The President : "If you are not guilty, it is easy to say so."

Mr. George was proceeding, but was interrupted by loud cries.

Mr. Reece : "I wish the Conference would leave the putting of questions in the hands of the President alone."

Mr. George : "An attempt is made to coerce me."

The President : "If you affect an independence, become an Independent altogether." Amid loud cries of "Question," Dr. Bunting : "The Conference had better leave the matter in the hands of the President. Everyone should give up his claim to be heard when the President desires to address the Conference." Mr. George declined to give a direct answer, and was classified with Mr. Everett. Three non-signers, T. H. Walker, T. Rowland, and A. Learoyd, declared their abhorrence of the *Fly Sheets*.

Mr. Duncan proposed a resolution, with regard to *reporting*, not to restrict



it, but to impress the brethren with their responsibility in regard to it. "Little transpires in the Conference which it is desirable to conceal."

Dr. Bunting: "The question of reporting is beset with difficulties. It would be hazardous to pass a resolution on so important a subject from an incidental debate. It would be better to receive the report of an adequate committee on the subject. There is a material difference between the reporting for the *Watchman* and the *Wesleyan Times*. The general tone of the former is conservative of Methodism, the latter hostile."

Mr. J. W. Thomas: "I am ashamed that so much time and attention has been devoted to these miserable productions. I suppose the writers are vain of the sensation they have created."

He then went off into a jaunty and facetious speech, grotesquely and yet grimly out of keeping with the sadness and solemnity of such a moment. He announced himself as the pseudonymous "Vates" who had cast such unfounded imputations upon Dr. Beaumont and Mr. Kay. Dr. Beaumont treated his gibes with a dignified, consistent silence; but Mr. Kay demanded: What authority had he for stating *Fly Sheet* No. 1 was written by a retired missionary, and insinuating that he (Mr. Kay) was the man? "I denounce this slander. I emphatically deny all connection with the *Fly Sheets*."

Mr. J. W. Thomas: "I am glad that Mr. Kay has tried on the cap and found it not to fit him." (A laugh.) And with this *amende* the maligned minister had to be content.

The committee recommended the expulsion of Mr. Everett for refusing to answer the question put to him; but that Mr. Burdsall, in consideration of his age and infirmities, be only admonished from the Chair.

The President called Mr. Griffith from his place and asked: "Are you taking notes of the proceedings of the Conference?"

Mr. Griffith: "I am, and I presume that many members of the Conference are doing the same."

The President: "Are you taking notes for the purpose of reporting to the *Wesleyan Times*?"

Mr. Griffith: "No; I am taking notes for the purpose of aiding my recollection of the proceedings of this momentous Conference."

The President: "Have you this year, or in former years, reported the proceedings of Conference in the *Wesleyan* or *Wesleyan Times*?"

Mr. Griffith: "Mr. President, there must be some limit of time to these inquiries." (Cries of "Answer the question," "No evasion.") "I appeal to the Chair, and put myself under its protection. *I will reply to questions put to me by you*, and hope to have no more of these interruptions, which to any man are most confusing, especially to one cited before the Conference. I assure you, sir, that whatever replies I give shall not be *evasive*. They shall be open, honest, and straightforward. I am not going to evade a single question."

The President: Have you, during this Conference, reported any of its proceedings to the *Wesleyan Times*?"

Mr. Griffith: "If the Conference will allow me, I should like to take time to consider my answer to this question."

The President: "The request is reasonable, and the Conference grants it."

At the next sitting Mr. Griffith answered: "Every member of the Conference must know that there are ministers who have reported for the *Watchman* the proceedings of this Conference."

Dr. Bunting: "Mr. Griffith must see that the cases are not parallel. The *Watchman* is altogether conservative of Methodism; the *Wesleyan Times* is thoroughly hostile to it."

Mr. Griffith: "That is a matter of opinion. In my opinion the *Wesleyan Times* is as strongly attached to *Wesleyan* Methodism as the *Watchman*, and is much better serving its interests."

Dr. Bunting: "The *Wesleyan Times* has made very calumnious attacks upon members of the Conference, including even the President."

Mr. Griffith: "The *Watchman* has made very calumnious attacks upon members of the Conference, including even the then Secretary, Mr. Fowler."

The President: "Mr. Griffith can bring forward the subject of reporting for the *Watchman* at a subsequent period."

A debate ensued, in which Drs. Bunting and Newton, and Messrs. Macdonald, Barton, Rule, E. Walker, Rigg, S. D. Waddy, and Scott, took part.

Dr. Beaumont: "The *Watchman* has endorsed and made its own all the anonymous calumnies of the *Papers on Wesleyan Matters*." A resolution condemnatory of the *Wesleyan Times*, and of the Preachers who countenance it, was then carried with but two dissentients.

The President: "Will you engage not to report for the *Wesleyan Times*, Mr. Griffith?"

Mr. Griffith: "I will pledge myself not to communicate with the *Wesleyan Times* when the other members of the Conference pledge themselves not to communicate with the *Watchman*."

The President: "Are you, or are you not, the author of the *Fly Sheets*?"

Mr. Griffith: "I will give my reasons for not giving a bare answer of 'Yes' or 'No.'" This was not allowed, and Mr. Griffith proceeded: "I must decline to answer, if the Conference will not hear my reasons." Here he was interrupted by Mr. J. W. Thomas, to whom he made a short reply; but promptly added: "Mr. President, I most sincerely regret that I have done you the disrespect to condescend to notice the unseemly interruptions of Mr. Thomas."

Next came the motion for Mr. Everett's expulsion, in support of which Mr. J. W. Thomas made a scholastic speech, taking his stand not on Methodism law but on "universal law, those of Rome, Moses, and King Alfred; although he had great respect for and much admired the character of Mr. Everett." The expulsion was carried with but two dissentients. Dr. Beaumont renewed his disclaimer of all connection with the *Fly Sheets*, and Mr.

Duncan reminded the Conference that Mr. Fowler had, two years before, strongly avowed his disapproval of them.

The President : " It is very desirable that this discussion should be brought to a speedy end. I, therefore, will at once call up those who have to be questioned. Mr. Dunn, are you the author or the writer of the *Fly Sheets* ? "

Mr. Dunn began his reply by referring to the Conference two years before, at which he had expressed his sentiments with reference to those publications. The President insisted on a direct and immediate answer to the question. Mr. Dunn made repeated attempts to preface his reply by a statement, entreating to be allowed to answer " in his own way." But the President insisted on a simple " Yes " or " No."

Mr. Dunn said he could not answer without " explanatory observations." He then resumed his seat, the President observing : " You have had an opportunity of putting yourself right with your brethren."

A brother reminded the Conference that, two years before, Mr. Dunn had disclaimed connection with the *Fly Sheets*.

The President asked whether Mr. Dunn had deputed the brother to answer for him.

Mr. Dunn : " No."

The President : " Mr. Dunn has had full liberty to reply to the question."

Mr. Dunn : " I deny it."

Mr. Dunn attempted an explanation, but the President exclaimed : " I must have the confidence of the Conference." The Conference refused to hear him further, and he withdrew.

Mr. Harris stated that Mr. Bromley had declared to him and Mr. West that he had no knowledge of the authors of the *Fly Sheets*, and he disliked their matter and spirit.

Dr. Bunting : " Why, then, cannot Mr. Bromley say as much before the Conference ? He ought to do so."

The President : " Has Mr. Bromley any communication to make on the subject ? "

Mr. Bromley : " I have no communication to make on the subject." Mr. Rigg, his Superintendent, entreated him to answer.

The President : " Are you the author or writer of the *Fly Sheets* ? "

Mr. Bromley : " I have no answer to give, Mr. President, to any question put under the sanction of the law of 1835."

The President : " You have rejected our system of discipline. From the beginning the Conference has asserted its right to put any question to any of its members."

Mr. Bromley : " From the beginning it has been the right of every member to withhold an answer. I have no answer to give."

The President : " About the middle of the last century Preachers arose charging the Conference with oppression. Mr. Wesley said : ' I will not interfere with your conscience, and you shall not interfere with mine.' This part of our discipline must be maintained, not rashly, but in an emergency." The President then referred to a pledge given by Mr. Bromley of submission to the Conference.

Mr. Bromley : " That pledge was given before the Declaratory Law was passed—posteriorly to the pledge I gave to the Conference."

The cases of Messrs. George, Griffith, Dunn, and Bromley were referred to the same committee which had reported upon Mr. Everett.

Four days later Messrs. Dunn and Griffith once more appeared before the Conference to hear the report of the committee. They had been heard and questioned *separately* by the committee. The report approved of the action of the Conference in availing itself of its *original and constantly exercised* right of proposing such brotherly inquiries as it may deem necessary for its satisfaction in reference to any of the brethren. Secondly, it condemned Messrs. Dunn and Griffith for their communications to the *Wesleyan Times* and the publication of the *Wesley Banner*. Thirdly, it condemned their declining to answer the questions proposed to them in the Conference. Fourthly, it recommended that their continuance in the Body should be made conditional on their pledging themselves : (1) Not to send any further communications to the *Wesleyan Times*. (2) To discontinue the publication of the *Wesley Banner*.

With these conditions they refused to comply, and for this refusal were expelled.

Dr. Dixon, with much emotion, informed the Conference that he and Mr. William Bunting had conversed with Mr. Bromley and obtained from him the promise to discontinue his resistance of the law of 1835, on condition that he might state his reasons; and if these reasons did not satisfy the brethren, he should conclude that he must be mistaken, and at once submit. But he declared to the Conference his determination to share the fate of Messrs. Dunn and Griffith. He was spared; but so conducted himself during the next year as to secure his excision by the Conference of 1850.

It must be noted that the express ground of the expulsion of Messrs. Dunn and Griffith was their refusal to pledge themselves to (1) desist from sending communications to the *Wesleyan Times*; (2) discontinue the publication of the *Wesley Banner*.

Messrs. Walton and George were severally admonished from the Chair. The former received his rebuke in silence; the latter declared: "I am not conscious of having merited such a reproof."

A resolution was adopted in which Conference recorded its grateful sense of the services rendered to the Connexion by the *Watchman* newspaper.

Mr. Rule proposed Mr. Bromley's *immediate expulsion*; but

Mr. Rigg wisely counselled the Conference to consider first the effect which such a decision, so precipitately taken, would have upon the people.

Next morning, on the reading of the Journal, a brother complained that the audacity of Mr. Everett had not been duly represented.

Dr. Bunting: "The original design of taking these Minutes was to put down the *resolutions* of the Conference in order that they might be printed; but now they are merely intended to aid our recollection and keep up in the mind an idea of the proceedings of the Conference. I am very jealous of a certain newspaper. Reports which appear in party newspapers are not authentic. *I have great confidence in one individual, who has been accustomed to take from year to year reports of the proceedings of Conference*" (Mr. Fowler).

A long and warm discussion then took place upon the fact that Mr. Everett's name was passed over without objection in the York District Meeting.

The Chairman, Mr. A. Bell: "There was no ground for objection. I waited till the last day for some instructions or charges from the President or others."

The Secretary of the District asked the ex-President whether any communication respecting Mr. Everett had been sent to the Chairman. No answer.

Dr. Bunting: "It was a mistake of Dr. Newton not to send information to the Chairman."

Mr. Eastwood: "The *Fly Sheets* did not come before the District Meeting."

Dr. Bunting: "The more shame for you. It ought to have done."

I have found it necessary to note the most salient and significant proceedings of this Conference, in order to account for the effect produced by its expulsions on so many thousand Methodists and on the outside public. If the thermometer of feeling rise to fever heat in the cool, deliberative shade of a sedate Pastoral conclave, it is not likely to stand at *temperate* in the outside "blaze of day." Immediately after describing the heating, agitating, *aggravating* results of the *Papers on Wesleyan Matters*, and the general tone of feeling manifested by the Wesleyan ministry, clearly showing that the ensuing Conference would take some decisive action, Dr. George Smith adds: "Under such excitement the Methodist people awaited the proceedings of the Conference of 1849—that memorable epoch in Wesleyan history." The articles in the *Watchman* designating as the next President a former President, who at

the foregoing Conference had received but a single vote, on the ground that some critical and extraordinary measures must be taken, and its daring and untruthful disparagement of the Secretary of the Conference, and its adoption of the anonymous slanders published with regard to him in the aforesaid Papers, had prepared the Methodist mind for very stringent measures in the event of the *Watchman's* nominee being accepted by Conference. The expulsion of Everett in a somewhat summary fashion would not have startled anyone, nor, I have reason to believe, very greatly troubled any considerable number of the Methodist people. Anonymous slander was not appreciated by the Connexional conscience in the main ; and had anonymous slander, by whomsoever propagated, been dealt with *impartially*, very little, if any, harm would have resulted.

But the expulsion of two other ministers for the cause announced—namely, the refusal to pledge themselves not to send communications to the *Wesleyan Times*, and to discontinue a comparatively harmless and honest periodical, the *Wesley Banner*—for this the Connexion generally was unprepared.

As to Metropolitan Methodism, with which I was at that time well acquainted, it came upon our people less like a thunder-clap than like an earthquake shock and reel, threatening displacement, cleavage, overthrow to a terrible extent. The expulsion of Messrs. Dunn and Griffith took place on Saturday morning, August 11th, and on Monday morning, the 13th, the President announced to the Conference that he had received several memorials strongly remonstrating against the expulsions. One of these came from a large body of Leaders, Local-preachers, and Stewards in the Third London Circuit. This had been done so quietly and so promptly that neither Mr. Hardcastle nor myself had the slightest knowledge or suspicion of any such proceeding. Our colleagues, Mr. Duncan and Mr. Gilchrist Wilson, were at Conference.

I can never forget my first intelligence of these expulsions. One of our foremost laymen, Dr. Luke Farrar, brother of the Revs. Abraham and John Farrar, both of them in the front rank of platform-men, called upon me. His countenance wore an aspect of such grave significance that I feared some other principal members of my flock had fallen victims to the cholera, which was raging all around us. He fixed his eyes on me and said, with bated breath : " So they've expelled the three men." " Which *three* men ? " I answered.

He rejoined, with slow and weighty emphasis : "*The Conference have expelled Everett, Dunn, and Griffith.*" "No !" I exclaimed protestingly, "*Everett only.*" He answered : "If you can't believe me, here are letters from my brothers Abraham and John." He seemed bewildered as to his own course, but quite certain as to the effect upon the Circuit and the Connexion.

Wherever I went the impression seemed the same. Methodism seemed to have gone into mourning. "All faces gathered blackness." It was like "Black Friday" in the City. When the Superintendent had returned from the Conference he found notices scattered broadcast amongst our people of a meeting to be held in the large school-room of St. George's chapel, for the purpose of raising a subscription on behalf of the expelled ministers. He at once called a ministers' meeting at my house to consult as to the course to be pursued. Each was asked to give his view in the order of our juniority. Mr. Quick, the Thames missionary, discreetly suggested that as his sea-going flock knew nothing of the matter, he, too, had better keep as far from it as possible. Mr. Gilchrist Wilson came next, my junior in the ministry though my senior in the natural life. He was a very able and very amiable brother, but cherished very high Scotch notions of ministerial prerogative. He was for the sternest and the promptest surgical treatment of the case : "Cut off a limb to save a body." This was said with such rigidity that I could not but exclaim :

"Have by some surgeon, Shylock, at your charge,  
To stop his wounds, lest he do bleed to death."

It was my turn next. My counsel came to this : "If you mean to carry out Circuit measures on the same lines as these Conference measures, I see nothing for it but Brother Wilson's policy of the knife. But mind, if you turn out one in this Circuit you turn out a thousand at the very least."

"Nonsense !" exclaimed Mr. Wilson and the Superintendent in one breath.

I proceeded thus : "Is it possible that you can have lived and laboured amongst these people and not see that ! These people love their ministers above all men, and that is what is moving them, in the main."

"Nonsense !" cried my dear friend and brother, Wilson. But I mentioned proofs of the love of East-end Methodists for their

ministers, which compelled a full admission of the fact first named, and of a resolve to succour the expelled, which clearly proved the latter. "But," I added, "they also love their Leaders and have confidence in them and each other."

Brother Hardcastle took Mr. Wilson's view ; so I was left alone as the advocate for what Burke calls "healing measures" —the poultice first and the lancet only when that failed.

The Superintendent, indeed, admitted freely and fully that the chief motive of the malcontents was sympathy with ministers whom they thought to be aggrieved and hardly dealt with. He said the main promoter of the sympathy movement had called on him and asked in what circumstances the three expelled were supposed to be, and that he had answered : "Everett lives as if he were well off with the profits of his books and whatnot, and Griffith's wife is wealthy ; but as for Sammy Dunn, he is not worth a *stiver*, but had to sell his books to keep up his subscription to the missions." In vain I counselled the giving as much tether as was possible to an excited but kind-hearted people, to turn Nelson's blind eye to brave men's breach of discipline, and shift Sir Joshua Reynolds's ear trumpet when leal-hearted Methodists spoke rashly.

It was resolved to take the most stringent measures without more delay. The first step was to prevent, if possible, and if not, to declare Methodistically actionable, the announced meeting in St. George's schoolroom, to raise a sympathetic contribution for the three expelled.

Brother Wilson had been trained as a Scotch lawyer or writer to the Signet. He counselled the calling a meeting of the Trustees of St. George's, and inducing them to take out an injunction against the meeting. It was resolved, however, to consult Dr. Bunting on the question. So we betook ourselves to the Mission House, and were asked into his room. He had himself but just arrived. We found him seated in the middle of the room, and instinctively ranged ourselves two on either side his chair. The scene was unforgettable. The really grand old minister and administrator ; ecclesiastically speaking, "a man of wars and woes," with his commanding contour, his venerable, senatorial, statesmanly, impressive mien and brow ; on either side of him two oddly assorted but markedly individualised individualities, leaning towards him with a reverence most unfeigned.

Mr. Wilson's counsel as to the Trustees' meeting was sub-



mitted to him, and after deep deliberation he approved it. The Trustees' meeting was accordingly convened. In the meantime being invited to dine at Mr. Scott's, I entreated him to revisit his old Circuit and exert his matchless influence upon the malcontents; for the reverence and affection for him in the Third London Circuit was universal and profound; the most effective leader of the movement, Mr. Chipchase, regarding him as the ideal Methodist administrator. But I could not convince Mr. Scott of the utility of his intervention, and when I called on Mr. Chipchase I saw that Mr. Scott was right.

The Trustees met, the four ministers being present, but the Trustees definitely refused to inhibit the announced meeting on the premises. Mr. Chipchase was their mouthpiece. He showed himself throughout the four years' contest the ablest argumentative advocate on that side of the question. Martin, of Altrincham, was their most fluent, graceful, and persuasive speaker, reminding one of his father-in-law, Mr. Allen, of all the New Connexion preachers the most eloquent. The Cheshire Martin was to the one side what the Cornish Garland was to the other. Chipchase was the coolest debater I ever heard. But his was the coolness of concentration. He always had himself and his resources well in hand. I, like everybody else, myself, I believe, included, had no previous suspicion of his powers; though but for an irrepressible egotism he would have been the most popular Local-preacher in the Circuit. I had never exchanged a syllable with him on "Methodist politics" till I went to try to induce him not to do anything that might tend to destroy the work of God in one of the most fruitful fields of Methodism. But the most portentous aspect of the dissatisfaction in the Third London Circuit was its deadly calmness. Mr. Chipchase's points, which carried the Trustees' meeting, were these: The expelled ministers seem to us to be objects rather of pity than of condemnation. The mode and the express ground of their excision are to a high degree objectionable. Mr. Everett is stated to have been expelled for refusing to answer an incriminating question without knowing his accuser or the crime of which he was accused. But that same ground had been taken in the Conference by other ministers, who had nevertheless been very differently treated. Besides, the law and constitution of Methodism had prescribed a very different course in the case of any Minister coming under suspicion. It is said in justification of this confessedly

irregular procedure that it was rendered necessary by the resort to anonymous attacks on character by some person or persons unknown, who could not otherwise have been detected. But, it was replied, attacks on ministerial character had been publicly sold at the Book Room ; and although this fact had come before the Conference in its ordinary course of business by the resolution of the Nottingham District Meeting, far more strongly condemnatory than the resolution on the *Wesley Banner*, which it had accompanied, yet not the slightest notice had been taken by the Conference of the anonymous detractions and disingenuous imputations in the *Papers on Wesleyan Matters*, nor the least attempt to detect and expose their authors. Mr. Dunn and Mr. Griffith were stated to have been expelled for refusing to pledge themselves not to send communications to the *Wesleyan Times* unless their brethren would, on their part, pledge themselves not to send communications to the *Watchman*, another paper which was agitating the Connexion by its interference with the affairs of Conference ; and because they would not bind themselves to suppress an edifying periodical which contained no other than defensive controversy, and that far less disturbing to the people's minds than was the newspaper to which the Conference had passed a laudatory vote of thanks. "All this," said Chipchase, "bore to himself and many others the appearance of an arbitrary and high-handed mode of getting rid of a troublesome minority ; and as expulsion implied the infliction of a severe pecuniary penalty as well as the loss of status and sphere, he did not think that the holding on Methodist premises of a meeting to form a relief fund on their behalf was a misappropriation of those premises." In the course of this speech he adopted Mr. Bromley's epithet "un-English," and Mr. Duncan interjected laughingly : "But *I am not* English." Chipchase paused and fixed his eyes upon his interrupter, and answered with a significant, incisive emphasis : "*No*, Sir, you are *not*."

Mr Chipchase was followed by others in the same strain ; and the Trustees resolved *not* to take out the prohibitive injunction. Thus opened the campaign. The reasons given by the Trustees for not prohibiting the meeting were substantially identical with those subsequently put forth at the meeting in St. George's schoolroom. It was agreed that the Superintendent, supported by his colleagues, should appear at the beginning of the meeting and protest. My earnest counsel

was that, having done this, if the meeting should not forthwith disperse, we should quietly leave the room. I approached my two Scotch colleagues on their most accessible side, that of Presbyterian propriety and dignity. I held that to continue in the meeting after such a declaration would be to let down our persons and our office, and to place ourselves in a ludicrously false position. We should lower ourselves in the sight of our own people by the inversion of the true and customary order of affairs. Accustomed to the pulpit and the platform, and to be looked up to from below, we should now see how a shepherd looked and felt when, from a lower room, he looked up to members of his flock, seated in their chairs of state, and "begged leave to ask," or "sat beneath the sound" of their strictures, criticisms, and possibly their "calls to order." If we maintained the gravity of mutes whilst actionable language was employed, we should be set down as having no strong reasons to bring forth. If we were incessantly starting to our feet with objections and corrections, we should be drawn into a most unseemly altercation.

But my colleagues looked upon the matter from quite another point of view. My own mind, however, was relieved by the Superintendent's telling me that, to keep Mr. Gandy from the meeting, he had appointed his Class to meet for tickets, and wished me to take the duty.

This was a task much more to my taste than attending a possibly contentious meeting. But I received full accounts of the proceedings from ministers and people and a carefully-taken report.

The large schoolroom was crowded. The three ministers, Messrs. Duncan, Hardcastle, and Gilchrist Wilson, mingled with the crowd. Mr. Hildreth Kay was voted into the Chair. He was certainly the best selection they could have made. By temperament reserved, sedate, and taciturn, he was by habit studious, cautious, and reflective. He was deeply devout, and his experience, as given at the Quarterly Visitation of his Class, was living, thoughtful, humble, and all the more manly for being so childlike and so simple.

He stated the object of the meeting to be deciding on the best means of giving practical expression of their sympathy for the three ministers who had been deprived of their ministerial position and maintenance. He would not characterise the manner in which this had been effected, but would

simply read the statements put forth on both sides, that of the expelled, and that which had been issued by the authority of Conference, and should leave the meeting to judge whether they were fit objects of sympathy on the part of the Methodist people.

Here the Superintendent interposed the question whether all who crowded the schoolroom were office-bearers in the Circuit.

The Chairman : " With all deference, I think the Superintendent himself is better able to answer that question than I am."

Mr. Duncan : " The premises in which we are assembled are for Wesleyan purposes, and I must forbid any observations being made which would reflect upon the action of the Conference in this case." Some signs of disapproval of this statement being audible, the Chairman immediately rebuked them : " We shall gain nothing by such expressions of feeling. We must keep our minds in a proper state for weighing the facts on either side." Mr. Duncan also solemnly warned the meeting about excitement, as that might betray them into expressions which would expose them to unwished-for consequences. When the Chairman began to read the statements of the case by both sides, another protest against the proceedings was read by one of the two objecting Trustees. Some impatience being manifested, the Chairman said : " The meeting will not prevent discussion unless it be carried so far as to destroy the very object of the meeting."

The Rev. P. Hardcastle having interrupted twice, the Chairman blandly remarked : " I beg to remind Mr. Hardcastle that his Superintendent has distinctly pronounced this to be an illegal meeting. Mr. Hardcastle can scarcely persist in taking part in such a meeting before his Superintendent's eyes."

Mr. Chipchase then thanked the Superintendent for warning them against excitement. He confessed his own need of such a warning, lest he should say anything he might afterwards regret. Excitement should be chastened by prudence and regard to the principles of our holy religion. " The great majority of us are office-bearers. I move: That this meeting expresses its firm and unabated attachment to Methodism as taught in the works of the Rev. John Wesley. Whatever of spiritual good we may possess, we owe it, under God, to Methodism. We are holding upon Wesleyan premises, with the permission of almost the entire body of Trustees, a meeting for a purely Wesleyan object."

His speech was a variation on that in the Trustees' meeting. He finished it by saying :

" If I have said anything that reflects upon our ministers, I apologise for it and retract it ; I love our ministers. We are told that this meeting is irregular. I will not dispute this. But we are assured by a high authority (the President) that, ' in such extraordinary circumstances, we must not stick at technicalities.' I am sorry at the tone of threat in the Superintendent's speech." He besought them all not to let this matter interfere any further

with their Church work. For his own part, he should meet his Class, attend to his appointments on the plan, his weekly Leaders' Meeting, and all his other duties, just as steadily as ever, and he hoped they would all do the same. Contribute to a fund for the relief of the three expelled ministers, memorialise the Conference, and stick to Methodism and its blessed means of grace, if possible, more closely than before. "*Keep to Methodism*. What would you gain if you left it?"

Mr. Biddle, Local-preacher, Leader, and Trustee, supported the resolution. He was the patriarch of our cause at Stratford, and a most patriarchal personage he was. His keynote was: "I love our Preachers," which evoked a burst from the rest of the meeting: "And so do we." It seemed to him that some of them had been hardly and unfairly treated, and therefore claimed the sympathy of the people. Mr. Volckman, another Local-preacher, of the well-known firm of wholesale confectioners, followed in the same tone and on the same line. His house was the ministers' home at Stratford, so they were mutually well acquainted, respected, and beloved.

Mr. Hunt moved a resolution "to raise a fund for the support of the expelled ministers." He was an able and popular Local-preacher, and Secretary of the Quarterly Meeting. He was an enthusiastic Preacher's man, a shrewd, successful man of business, gentlemanly by habit and association, as well as by nature and by grace, with a redundant cheerfulness and kindliness, which overflowed in a rich, delightful humour of which he held the patent. But, unlike the other speakers, he was impulsive and impetuous, and there was an acid in his speech which caused an effervescence. He said: "I know from Mr. Duncan's own lips that his own sympathies will not allow him to interfere with the raising a subscription for the unfortunate men." His point was that the ordinary rules of equal justice and fair play had been disregarded in the present case; that it was clearly unfair and unequal that what was announced as a law essential and inviolable should be brought to bear upon three men, whilst others who had broken it were left scot-free. He pointed to the disregard of Mr. W. M. Bunting's protest against the manifest unfairness of appointing on the judicial committee on the case three men who were already committed to an adverse judgment, one of them being, in fact, the prosecutor in chief! This point seemed to tell upon the meeting more than any other.

He then called attention to the strange unfairness of making the continuance of Messrs. Dunn and Griffith in the Wesleyan Methodist ministry dependent on different conditions from those on which they had originally received and hitherto retained that ministry; yet they were quite willing to accept those conditions, if the like conditions were laid upon the other members of the

Conference. They were forced to choose between promising not to send communications to the *Wesleyan Times* or being expelled from the Wesleyan Methodist ministry; whilst the rest were left at liberty to contribute to another paper, which took equal liberties in intermeddling with Conference matters and with Conference officials. He pointed out instances in which the *Watchman* had shown itself to be the one-sided organ of a party. He contended that the whole affair had too much of the appearance of a party triumph.

A resolution to appoint a committee of management for a relief fund was moved by Mr. Wells, a venerable Leader, and seconded by Mr. Holman, a Trustee, and Leader of the largest Class in the St. George's Society. He was an old Cornish Methodist, and a more enthusiastic admirer of Methodist Preachers I never met with. His reminiscences of the sayings and doings of the "bright succession" of first-class Methodist Preachers who had laboured in the Third London Circuit for a stretch of years were seemingly exhaustless. To meet his Sunday afternoon Class was a heavy toil but a richer luxury. One always found between forty and fifty actually present, and each with a living personal experience. He was our finest singer; his rich mellow notes could be easily distinguished when the large chapel was crowded with exultant worshippers.

A subscription of nearly £80 was made upon the spot.

Mr. Duncan was rightly most reluctant to commence hostilities. His expository and yet most animated preaching was greatly valued by the people who had been trained to solid, thoughtful ministrations. He soon saw that the expulsion of one of their beloved and trusted Leaders would involve the devastation of the Circuit, and we had 2,665 members, the largest number in any Circuit excepting York and City Road. Our eleven well-attended chapels, some of them amongst the finest in the Body, would be almost emptied. There was no probability of obtaining a verdict at either the Spitalfields or the St. George's Leaders' Meetings of any capital infringement of Methodist law in a public expression of opinion adverse to the expulsion of the three ministers.

Mr. Duncan's three new colleagues—Dr. Stinson, W. O. Booth, and Theophilus Woolmer—were of the finest spirit, pre-eminently men of peace. Two of them were closely connected with one or other of the expelled. Mr. Booth had been converted under the early ministry of Mr. Everett, and Mr. Woolmer

was brother-in-law to William Griffith. The sympathisers, on their part, shrank from doing anything which might necessitate decisive action on the part of Mr. Duncan. Their eye spared the splendid congregations and societies which they had seen grow up and had helped to build up. So Mr. Duncan took no action for four anxious months. During that interval I revisited my old Circuit more than once. I preached at Spitalfields on the Sunday evening. The fine old chapel was positively packed; even the pulpit steps had to be utilised as seats. It was an inspiring and at the time an affecting spectacle. I preached on Christian unity, of course without the slightest allusion to the disturbed state of the Circuit and Connexion. I chose our most subduing hymns on unity, and how mightily they sang! I called upon my dear old Superintendent and conversed with all his colleagues and with the leading friends, entreating them not to sacrifice one of the grandest Circuits in Methodism to the one side or the other of a Conference dispute.

The first and fatal prosecution—that of the, on the whole, most notable and influential man of all, Mr. Gandy—took place on the 14th of January, 1850. The indictment, brought by the Superintendent, was his "*having taken the Chair at a meeting in which the action of the Conference in relation to the three expelled ministers had been freely questioned.*" The Leaders' Meeting did not see in this act anything worthy of Connexional death.

Mr. Hunt was subsequently, on the charge of having *spoken at* a meeting of the kind in terms of disapproval of the same Conference act, brought to trial before the Leaders' Meeting at St. George's. They viewed the matter in the same light as their brethren at the mother chapel, and could not give a verdict fatal to his membership. So the last extreme resort of a Special District Meeting was fallen back upon. It was seen to be bootless to arraign before a Leaders' Meeting the two others whom it was thought expedient to expel—Messrs. Chipchase and Hildreth Kay. This ultimate appliance, the precedent for which was the Leeds organ discord of 1827, more than two-and-twenty years before, was again brought forth. It was noted as a remarkable coincidence that the examiner-in-chief was the same in both cases, Dr. Bunting, who was in neither case the Chairman.

There were some conspicuous awkwardnesses about the composition of the tribunal on which hung the Methodistic

fate of these four devoted Methodists. I remember talking over the matter shortly afterwards with Dr. Rigg, and he fully admitted that to English eyes it could not but present a questionable aspect. In the first place, the authoritative summoner and the President of the court was the very individual who had so energetically conducted the proceedings of the Conference, for criticising which the four accused were put in peril of their Methodistic lives. Again, the four laymen had to confront as arbiters of their Connexional existence a hundred and sixteen ministers, of whom the odd sixteen were especially committed beforehand to a verdict against them.

The Leaders of Spitalfields and of St. George's were summoned before the District Meeting, and informed that the one in acquitting Mr. Gandy, and the other in acquitting Mr. Hunt, had given a verdict contrary to the evidence, and had thus demonstrated their unfitness for trying other cases of the kind.

The Leaders protested that they had returned a conscientious finding according to their own best judgment, and withdrew.

The District Meeting then adjourned for a week; and Messrs. Gandy and Hunt and two others, Messrs. Chipchase and Hildreth Kay, who had not been tried at all, were informed by letter from the President that, though they had forfeited the privilege of membership, the District Meeting would hear what they had to say in arrest of judgment. They accordingly appeared at the appointed hour. They then delivered in a written protest, signed by eighty-two office-bearers of the Circuit, against a reversal by the District Meeting of the verdict of the Leaders' Meetings in the case of Messrs. Gandy and Hunt, and against the unconstitutional denial of a trial by their peers to their worthy and beloved brethren, Messrs. Chipchase and Hildreth Kay. The four accused delivered in also on their own account a written declaration to the effect that, being already informed by the President himself that their membership was "*forfeited*," all further altercation would be a waste of temper and of time, although they were also informed that they were not yet expelled. They then made their bow and silently withdrew. The District Meeting, after some discussion, authorised the Superintendent to withhold the tickets of the four brethren.

Thus closed this scene of the lamentable tragedy. The



catastrophe soon followed. This magnificent Circuit was almost destroyed. The noble picture of the seventy-second Psalm was all but reversed. The glorious harvest field which, in the Spirit's mighty breath, was wont to "shake like Lebanon," with all its green and spreading branches, became once more "a handful of corn upon the top of the mountains." When the storm had spent its fury, and kind Charles Westlake came, with a diminished staff, to take the Superintendency of the devastated Circuit, his welcome to it might have been: "Let this ruin be under thy hand." No one who never saw the ruin can duly estimate the mighty work of restoration which God accomplished through the zeal and liberality and perseverance of Alexander Macaulay, who to such a wonderful extent succeeded in resuscitating and rehabilitating the Circuit that had sent him out, building four large new chapels, exactly suited to Methodist preaching, worship, and fellowship, and in prominent positions.

But too many Superintendents in 1849 did not trouble themselves at all with such trivial technicalities as trial by Leaders' Meeting or Special District Meeting. They simply drew their pen across a "sympathiser's" name in a Class book, or if a Leader had contributed to the fund for the expelled ministers, his Class book was just pocketed and his members left ticketless and thunderstruck. Most of these exploiters of expulsion, whose names it would be easy to produce, as well as those of their desolated fields of battle, were already "famous in the congregation" for what Richard Watson had described as "an intemperate use of authority," and what Dr. Bunting had described, in his stronger style, as "a Bashaw policy," which the remedial portion of the laws of 1835 had striven hard to guard against as "rash and unwarranted expulsion." But it is fair to say that they had only retrograded to the policy of 1828, when breaches of the law, in favour of authority, were proclaimed "constitutional in the extraordinary circumstances" (Minutes of Conference). Thus a probationer, now a venerable supernumerary, then on the President's list of reserve, who was sent soon after Conference as a supply to Bradford (Eastbrooke) received on this wise his first lesson in the administration of a Circuit. The first time his Superintendent, the new "Angel of the Church," winged his way to one of the most fruitful outlying "Hills" of Zion, where we had a lively society of between 100 and 200 members, and a large, commodious, crowded chapel, he could not wait for overt

acts of sympathy towards the expelled, but felt bound to make that the leading question as to the spiritual condition of the Church. Finding that the Leaders had subscribed to the Relief Fund of the three expelled, he took their Class books and bestowed them in his pocket ; and thus departed all the recognised Methodism of the place. Thus vanished, "like the baseless fabric of a vision," a goodly Christian Church which it had required a century to build : the first course of which was laid by the preaching mason of the neighbour village, Birstall, John Nelson, the fellow-labourer and friend of both the Wesleys.

How the town society might have fared, but for three timely facts, one cannot say. But, just at this nick of time, an incident occurred which checked, to a notable extent, these summary evictions. The Superintendent of the sister Circuit, Bradford, Kirkgate, on returning from the Conference, had found that a young Local-preacher had taken part in a public meeting in, I think, the Temperance Hall, the purpose of which was the raising an annuity for the three expelled. The Superintendent was about to leave the Circuit, had chivalrously resolved not to leave the household of faith in an insanitary state for his successor to set right. So, having inquired into the report, and found that "behold ! it was true !" he met the sympathiser's Class for tickets, and withheld his token of membership in the Methodist Society.

Now it so happened that this young man was the son of a successful minister, a but half-flogged though full-fledged Grove lad, and had himself served in the ranks of the ministry in South Shields and at Settle. Being a great outdoor Preacher and, like his father, a resolute revivalist, he had vociferated himself to the grave's mouth. He was the brother detailed to evangelise the overflow of Billy Dawson's congregation, which crowded the capacious sanctuary, Brunswick, Leeds, the last time he stood in its stately pulpit. He was the last man ever arrested in England for preaching out of doors without a licence. This was at Kirkby Malham, in the west of Yorkshire.

Now when he found himself on the wrong side of the Methodist door, he rubbed his solemn, penetrating eyes, and asked himself whether this sudden, expeditious dismemberment was quite according to Grindrod. That refractory Judge Blackstone of Methodism not only assured him it was not, but went so far as to point out to him the process of redress. So he reported himself to the Chairman of the District as illegally expelled, and

wished to know his remedy. The result was a *Minor District Meeting*, which reinstated the complainant. This decision had a very salutary influence, saving hundreds of well-worth-keeping members to the dear "*Old Body*." It showed that members could not be dismembered in the cavalier fashion which had been set by some respected ministers. This case came up, of course, at Conference, and, of course, I watched its progress with intensest interest. Happily for Methodism, the Chairman of the District was no less able, steadfast, cool, and tried a champion of liberty and law than Francis A. West. A determined struggle was kept up, under the leadership of Dr. Bunting, to rescue the over-zealous Superintendent from the humiliation involved in the restoration of the excised member. The question was debated foot by foot, like a battle in a mountain pass. But the veteran commander found himself confronted by a redoubtable antagonist in Mr. West. At last the question turned upon the sweep and stringency of the law of 1835 as applied to private members, and if Dr. Bunting could have made his point, the Minor District Meeting would have been nonsuited. But West then waxed bold, and, quietly confronting his interrogators, brought *them* up by this strong exclamation: "You will scarcely make your 'Declaratory Law' directly contradict the law of which it claims to be declaratory."

Dr. Bunting saw that the case was lost, and lost no time in giving up his sword with grace and dignity. He moved the adoption of the Report of the committee, which Dr. Newton seconded.

By this decision a most valuable man was saved to Methodism, besides the hundreds kept within the fold. This was the redoubtable William Savage, Robert Fowler's school-fellow, who became his fellow-minister in Canada.

The Superintendent of the Bradford (Kirkgate) Circuit was not the only worthy minister who, under the irritation and exacerbation of the *Fly Sheets* controversy, seemed for the moment to lose head and heart, and act in strangest contrariety to his habits and his antecedents, and the whole context of his ministerial history. Some Circuits bore Methodistically the aspect of a country under martial law. Judgment was given at the drumhead by not yet commissioned youngsters against veteran Class Leaders, who had been in the service twice as long as their condemnators had been in the world. Among the most famous of these aspirants

to be heroes of excision was an intellectualist probationer. His chief signs of an apostle were Class books, coolly pocketed and walked away with without more ado than, "You are no longer a Leader."

The preservation or dispersion of the societies in various Circuits was, for the most part, a matter of administration. In the same town one society would lose a thousand and another hardly ten, simply because in one the case was treated surgically and in the other pharmaceutically. Another powerful factor in the case, however, was the temper of the leading laymen. Thus the two Bradford Circuits were incalculably indebted to the sober-mindedness, sound-heartedness, and practical sagacity of the men of the greatest influence. But for them there could have been no Bradford Conference in 1853. But, alas! at that disjointed time we had men whose predestination seemed to be "to lay fenced cities in ruinous heaps."

But the great Barnet Battles, or Towton Fields, of Methodism were not fought till after the central Conference of the century—that in Wesley's chapel, in the year of grace 1850. Up to that time fond hopes of some concessive or conciliatory measure had been entertained by thousands. Hence a strong check had been made upon secession. The resolute excisionists had said: "We are prepared to part with 30,000 members." To which I had always answered: "We may think ourselves well off if we lose but 50,000."

As Conference approached, the Phætons who at that time were entrusted with the horses of the sun naturally asked themselves: "But what if Mr. Fowler be elected President?" The question cannot but arise: Can anything be done to stop the effusion of Connexional blood? If Mr. Fowler hold the Chair, a spirit of moderation and pacification is certain to prevail. By some means or other *that* must be precluded.

At first it was resolved to try diplomacy. Anonymous defamation and detraction had gone as far as it dare go. A genial and persuasive brother was selected to wait on Mr. Fowler and advise him to "retire from his candidature for the Presidency" this year, on "condition that everybody should vote for him next" year. But, "surely, in vain the net is spread in the sight of" eyes like those of Joseph Fowler! "The integrity of the upright shall guide him." Nehemiah-wise, he "perceived that the Lord had not sent him." So he replied to his kind counsellor (who was himself an altogether

innocent implement in the hand of others) that he should be most happy to oblige his flattering friends if they would ask something which it were possible to accomplish. He did not see how he could retire from that which he had never attempted to approach. He had never thought of putting up for the Presidency, and had never moved a lip or finger to obtain it. He would not make himself look unutterably foolish by any such assumption. His state of health soon became such as quite unfitted him for the labour of the Presidency.

## THE CONFERENCE OF 1850 AND ITS RESULTS.

One of the liveliest discussions at this Conference was that which referred to Dr. Beaumont's mild administration of the Sixth London Circuit in those wild, tempestuous times. The leading malcontents were Mr. Grosjean, a thriving West-end tradesman with Gallic blood careering in his veins; Mr. Jones, a sturdy, strong-built Welshman, whose proper sphere was a revival prayer-meeting; and, less prominently but not less practically, an astute solicitor, the son of the saintly commentator, Sutcliffe, and another wealthy man. Dr. Beaumont took the opposite course to that of the most approved administrators. He hated putting away, and did as little of it as he might. The case took up some three sittings, Beaumont's speech in vindication of his action occupying several hours of an evening and a morning sitting, as he dealt distinctly with the convoluted charges brought against him. He was sentenced to be censured from the Chair. He received the Presidential reprimand in perfect silence.

The most abandoned uproar I ever witnessed in my life took place in Wesley's chapel during this same crucial Conference. We were absorbed in an interesting discussion, of which I was taking careful notes (*not* for a *newspaper*), when, lifting my eyes to take a dip of ink, close beside the door of my pew, I suddenly became aware that there stood beside me in the aisle no other personage than Samuel Dunn. The apparition of the first Samuel at Endor was not so unexpected. Immediately the sonorous voice of Isaac Denison broke in on the discussion. "Mr. President, Samuel Dunn is in the Conference." Instantly almost the entire Conference started to its feet and shouted and gesticulated wildly. The sedatest and the calmest men, even on the platform, whom I had thought incapable of perturbation, conspired to turn that venerable sanctuary into the likeness of the theatre at Ephesus.

The President was as utterly ignored as if there were no order-keeping officer within the Council. All this time the Wesley Banner-bearer stood stretching forth his hand, which grasped a little packet tightly folded. The priests who hurried out the leprous King Uzziah from the Temple could not have shown a fiercer indignation and disgust than was then exhibited. Dr. Dixon said to me: "No council of New Zealand Chiefs could have misbehaved themselves as we have done to-day." Dunn threw upon the floor his subscription to the Annuitant Society.

Another painful part of the proceedings was the condemnation of Brother Thomas Rowlands. I have described him as he was just after the stress of weather in 1835. But fifteen years had aged him notably; he was now as grave and reserved as he had been sprightly and mercurial. His sentence was like that of Shimei, a circumscribing of his local habitation. But his doom was the reverse of that of the vituperative owner of "Shimei's hand and Shimei's tongue." By a sort of Five Mile Act he was forbidden to reside in London, which then was covered by the phrase, "*Within the Bills of Mortality*," or to inhale the sweet, strong air of Norfolk, which at that date was Methodistically miasmatic.

It pitted one to see his tall, spare figure and to listen to his solemn and sermonic cadences as he stood upon a pew-seat to speak for himself and to hear his judgment. But he was one of the few men whom I ever heard repay to Dr. Bunting "a Roland for an Oliver." As he pleaded that his loyalties should be set over against his lapses, Dr. Bunting interjected: "As Mr. Reece once said, 'Brother Rowland is always good in good company.'" (A laugh.) Brother Rowland answered, in the most measured and didactic tones: "If it were lawful to quote the dead in disparagement of the living, I might entertain the Conference with words of Richard Reece respecting Jabez Bunting not more complimentary than those just quoted as to Thomas Rowland." This evidently hit the mighty hitter on a tender part, for he replied with bated breath, "I daresay." For Richard Reece was well known to be not quite always entirely satisfied with Dr. Bunting's measures or his mannerisms.

Notwithstanding all these drastic measures, there was in many breasts a mighty yearning for the sending forth of the "mild, pacific dove" which had borne the olive branch across the assuaged, subsiding waters of 1795 to 1797. Knowing this, a few

of the partisans of pacification met as friends in council. As the youngest, I was selected to take notes. Our object was to rally the disheartened wellwishers of conciliated law and liberty. I have still the notes of our proceedings and the outline of our resolutions. Dr. Dixon, although sadly out of heart and obliged to lie upon the sofa all the time, engaged to take the part of Abner, and, standing on the platform, to cry: "Shall the sword devour *for ever*? Knowest thou not that it will be bitterness in the latter end?"

George Steward was to follow with his holy incantation of gentleness and concord, and then was to come John Burton, with his quiet, low-voiced earnestness and his practical lucidity. I cannot forget his prayer at our lowly, still conventicle, which Christ's presence consecrated. It was on the key of "Lift up thy prayer for the remnant that is left," and, like the ointment of a man's right hand, bewrayed the secret of his popularity. The rest of us were to follow as the occasion served, so as at least to reassure the party of peace they were "no their lane." Beaumont was to strike in if any pause occurred or any powerful speaker needed a reply. It had been expected that Dr. Dixon would himself be called in question, for he was as deep in the mud of moderation as Beaumont in its mire; but his mighty sermon on the evening of the Conference—Sunday, in John Wesley's pulpit, and in John Wesley's spirit and power, had overawed assailants. As he reasoned on, "I am ready to be offered up, and the time of my departure is at hand; I have fought a good fight, I have finished my course, *I have kept the faith*," such men as William Bunting and William Arthur "sat rapt." His grand horse-head seemed to sniff the battle-storm. He might have been addressing the assembly represented in the picture which once formed part of the adornment of many thousands of the dwellings of Jacob, and which I still rejoice to gaze upon and single out my grandfather from among the listening throng. Of that earnest gathering not one beside myself survives; John Burton, almost coeval with the century, has lately "overtaken his mates."

Of course, the most fitting time for making our appeal to the sentiment and relations of the Brethren was felt to be when the memorials from the Circuits should be considered. But these were not brought forward until the very last sitting of the Conference, which, like the preceding, was drawn out to its last legal limit.

Dr. Beaumont, when these important documents were introduced, stood up and said: "I grieve to find the consideration of so vital a matter postponed till Conference is at its very last gasp, and it is actually impossible to give either the individual memorials or the report of the committee the consideration which they imperatively demand, and when it is utterly useless to attempt to do justice to them. By this misarrangement of the order of business we are shut up to the course prearranged for us. Conference should strive to be at one with the people. The people are as essential to the idea of a ministry as the ministry is essential to the idea of a Church. We cannot exist alone, and we must not act alone."

Mr. W. M. Bunting: "At this late period of the Conference we are not prepared to come to a unanimous declaration of our conviction with regard to the memorials. I am not a friend to some of the regulations of 1835, but will conscientiously carry them out as long as they exist. At this time especially we ought to show disfavour to all attempts at setting at naught, or not paying respectful attention to, memorials legally prepared and expressed. Regretting the possibility of a divided vote, I am of opinion that it would be wise, and would better meet the views of some sound-minded Superintendents, to remit the memorials to a large committee, and to direct that committee to consider whether the resolutions should not go forth accompanied by a consideration of admissible points which the Conference might take up, and to invite any proper parties to contribute towards the conclusions of that committee."

Mr. G. B. Macdonald: "I entertain a strong opinion that the appointment of a large and fairly constituted committee to consider such proposed alterations as are compatible with maintaining our principles intact would do great good. Many of our best friends wish us to do so. There is much uneasiness in many Circuits from which no memorials have been sent. The subjects of the memorials are numerous and important. It would be regarded as an evidence of a spirit of conciliation and of willingness to give due attention to memorials which come through a legal channel, and yet had not been considered until the very last sitting of an exhausted Conference."

Mr. Arthur: "I feel that we have reached a critical point, and that on our present course, perhaps more than in any single act of the Conference, or even on all its acts, depends the future of that Methodism to which I am committed for life. The question before us is simply whether a committee shall be appointed or not. It is best not to look on this question in the light of making a concession, but in the simple light of propriety and wisdom. I would suggest whether it might not be desirable to consider the propriety of taking steps to provide the people with an authentic record of the Conference debates, and also the desirableness of giving our people greater facility of expressing their wishes to the Conference by providing some wider door of legitimate access. On these points it is with me a grave question whether we might not adopt practical improvements, and therefore I earnestly desire to see a committee named. I would solemnly remind the Conference that all eyes are looking forward to a crisis in Methodism. I implore the Conference to appoint a committee."

Mr. Naylor: "In my opinion a committee is unnecessary. As for easy access to the Conference by the people, what more can be required than is now possessed? As to reporters, any method would be better than the present."



The ex-President, Mr. T. Jackson: "I earnestly deprecate the appointment of a committee. I think such an arrangement unnecessary; and it would be positively injurious, and would give an impulse to agitation and shake the confidence of the best friends of Methodism. The minds of several of our people have been unsettled, and a call for indefinite changes has been raised; but the great body of our societies are satisfied, and desire nothing but a more efficient and zealous working of the system as it at present exists. A committee will not meet the expectation of those who desire change, and it will grieve those who desire it not. Will the Conference encourage those men in their idle and sinful course by appointing a committee?"

Dr. Newton: "I am of opinion that the disadvantages of a committee would be greater than the advantages."

Mr. Scott: "I have thought that, if cause could be shown to our true people, not to the agitators—I wish them to go, and a blessing go with them. But *many sound friends have been* led to raise questions, and what I think is, that if they are prepared to show cause against minor points or make any practical improvement, it may be well. *I am not prepared to say that everything in Methodism, as it is, is the best that could be.* I have therefore advised the appointment of a committee for such objects; but I would prescribe all essential points as settled already. I am, however, quite willing to waive my own view."

Other speakers took the view of Mr. T. Jackson and Mr. Naylor. Mr. S. Jackson said:

"I am greatly distressed by what I have heard. I have regarded you as a body of men who have seriously and thoroughly considered your principles and positions; who, after careful inquiry, had fully satisfied yourselves that the system of Methodism is in accordance with the New Testament. Now, however, it seems you are beginning to doubt, and talk of appointing a committee to inquire whether these things are so. Such a measure is useless. A committee will procure for you no credit or respect. Some will say that agitation has done good by frightening you. The committee might inquire whether or not we should hold another Conference. The committee will feel bound to do something, whether needed or not, and our friends would calculate on some considerable change. The result must be either general disappointment or a betrayal of trust."

Meanwhile the finger of the clock that faced the President was inexorably nearing the point which limited the legal duration of the Conference. There was now scant time for the reading of the Journal and the customary hymn and prayer. There was no time for Dr. Dixon, Steward, Burton, and the rest to deliver their sentiments and deliver their souls. Dixon, indeed, was, as he confessed, downhearted altogether. The intrepid war-horse seemed for the time to be "afraid as a

grasshopper." Mr. Scott shrank from breaking with the men with whom he generally acted. Nevertheless, his speech was strikingly characteristic; for he was the veritable Nestor of the camp—shrewd, kindly, reasonable, and abhorrent of extremes. He was distressed to see that gallant craft, the Third London Circuit, which he had so capably commanded for three such prosperous and God-favoured years, and had left in such splendid and auspicious trim, now bumping itself into a wreck upon the reef on which it had drifted in the fog, and to hear it grinding piteously against the jagged serpentine. He knew also that this disregard of memorials so legally presented and so loyally expressed would seriously embarrass the administration of his present Circuit, making "Merry Islington" put on a gruesome and portentous aspect.

Some noteworthy facts are very prominent in this discussion. First, *two voices* are distinctly audible—the voice of the turtle from the lips of Scott, William Bunting, George B. Macdonald, William Arthur, Dr. Beaumont; and the defiant crow of their opponents. Second, both sides rested upon extra-Conferential lay opinion. Both sides claimed "the people" and "our best friends" with equal confidence. For myself, I never met with more than one layman who would not have hailed any hearty response on the part of Conference to the appeals of Messrs. Scott, W. Bunting, Macdonald, Arthur, and Beaumont. It is to be noted that Dr. Bunting took no part in this discussion. A speech from him in the tone of his two speeches in 1835, first to the laymen and then to the ministers, would have been received with as much enthusiasm in 1850 as it was in 1835 by such loyal, law-abiding men as Mr. James Wood of Manchester, James Heald, Scarth of Leeds, Crook of Liverpool, Agar of York, Farmer of London, and so many others. Ten minutes' timely talk in the same key would have saved us thousands of members and at least a year of wasting agitation. That "the king's heart was towards" reconciliation I was assured at that very time by his noble eldest son. He said to me in sad and solemn tone: "I can assure you that my father does not approve of these excessive measures. It is his *tail!*"

The sequence of this definitive ignoring of legally presented and loyally expressed memorials was the loss to Methodism of nearly 57,000 members in one Methodist year—the centre of the century, 1850-1. This it effected in various ways.

It exasperated the aggressive malcontents, and it emphasised their representations of the spirit and temper of the preponderating party.

It gave all such Wesleyan ministers as were of a decidedly hierarchic temper, and who clutched as with a death-grip a hierarchical theory, an impetus in that direction which, as Mr. William Bunting so sagaciously forecast, all but desperately embarrassed "sound-minded Superintendents." And, not unnaturally from a polemic point of view, some of our veritably very "best friends" had replied to the "Stop the Supplies" tactics of the extreme extremists by forming a fund for the support of ministers, called, in honour of its chief promoter and contributor, the *Farmer Fund*.

I can think of no better way of showing the difference of effect between two contrasted lines of action in an ecclesiastical tornado, than by the example of a Circuit (Rochester) in which both systems were successively resorted to. Such a double experiment came under my own direct observation. From this it may be seen how a richly cultivated Hill of Zion was at first protected and then laid waste.

"My well-beloved had a vineyard in a very fruitful hill," and by the hands of his most faithful, skilful, indefatigable servants, "he gathered out the stones thereof, and planted it with the choicest vine." Founded by the Founder himself, no Circuit in the land, excepting Conference towns and Wakefield, had been favoured with so many Presidential men, such as Reece, Entwisle, Walter Griffith, Gaulter, Treffry, and Scott. This speciality of appointment it owed mainly to the admirable layman, to whom the Circuit itself was more indebted than to any other human agency for its exceptional attractiveness for ministers of mark. And along with him other laymen had co-worked with the choicest ministers to make the Circuit as the garden of the Lord.

This Conference of 1849 found this Goshen of a Circuit in the profoundest peace. There was not a murmur anywhere but the busy hum of holy, hopeful industry. The young minister appointed to that Circuit at that date found, to his delight, a cluster of united societies. All our chapels were well filled at all our Sunday services; our members never thought of missing Class, except through illness of themselves or families. Our Sunday schools were admirably officered and worked; our prayer-meetings filled the schoolroom; we had a plodding, popular City Mission,

worked by a Local-preacher, to which an officer in the army, a Churchman, gave £70 a year.

At our first ministers' meeting the three ministers determined on a Pastoral policy. The Superintendent, who was also Chairman of the District, was a veteran who had seen good service, but, being now considerably past his threescore years and ten, had begun to show symptoms of declining bodily strength, but no decay in the revivalistic fervour which he brought with him from his native Cornwall. The subduing sweetness of his disposition and his gentle, quiet manners gave him great favour with our families. Fifteen years younger he had met Dr. Warren in his raid on Cornwall, and had driven him out of the county. He was now replete with the mild wisdom of senectitude.

The second minister walked in the same spirit and in the same steps. He, too, had the advantage of large experience for many years abroad, and since that as Superintendent of such Circuits as Brighton, Luton, and Deptford. His physique was of elephantine girth and stature, and he was correspondingly of elephantine harmlessness, sagacity, and quietness.

Happily for ourselves and for our people, we were all of the same mind. Our policy was not, indeed, a plan of campaign but a plan of pacification. Our principles were these :—

1. *Not to take the initiative in agitation* nor stir up strife by implicating our people in an intra-Conferential conflict.

2. To "keep" God's garden as well as "dress" it. In order to this (a) prevent a visit from any of the three expelled by invitation either from our own people or from any other Church. (b) To prevent the holding of any public meeting with reference to this unhappy complication.

3. To say nothing in the pulpit, the Church meetings, or the families of our people which might be provocative of anything but love and good works.

4. To keep our people healthily preoccupied. (a) By preaching our very best, both as to matter and to spirit. (b) By indefatigable Pastoral visitation. (c) By keeping at high pressure all the agencies and appliances of Church life, making the most of the weekly prayer-meeting, the Quarterly Visitation of the classes, and the Sunday School Address.

5. To start a spirited chapel-building scheme, beginning with a new chapel in a populous new neighbourhood.

6. To form a Wesleyan Methodist Book Society for our

leading families and ourselves, so as to give our people something more savoury to think about and talk about than the weekly "rounds" of the *Watchman* and *Wesleyan Times*.

The humanising and the harmonising efficacy of this little culture of the "humanities" I had noted in other localities and more peaceful times. This, too, was a truly Wesleyan expedient; witness the Orphan House Library at Newcastle. Just then some works of special interest were issuing from the Press, such as Macaulay's fascinating "History of England," Dr. Hanna's "Life of Dr. Chalmers," "Guesses at Truth," by Julius and Augustus Hare; Curzon's "Monasteries of the Levant," which Ruskin justly pronounces one of the best books of travel ever written; and Ranke's exquisite monograph, the "History of Servia." By the good hand of our God upon us, these conjoint essays at peacemaking sped far beyond our sanguine expectations. Although all our leading members but two very strenuously misdoubted the wisdom of the course pursued with respect to Everett, Dunn, and Griffith, yet we had no visit from any one of them, no meeting on their behalf, no expulsion, no secession. The streams of eager, gladsome worshippers converged each Sabbath morn and even to the sanctuaries which knew so well the joyful sound of saving truth; our new chapel was built, opened, and filled, and the Word of the Lord ran and was glorified.

Within the boundaries of our Circuit lay an interesting tract of country, called the *Hundred of Hoo*, which enjoyed a notable immunity: never in the memory of any living man had it been visited by an imminent thunderstorm. Many a time and oft had its favoured population heard the portentous rumble at a distance, and listened to the nearer crash, and seen the horizon all aflame around them, but never did a flaming bolt come down upon its oaks or elms, its towers or spires, or plough up its fields or kill its cattle. It formed a peaceful *interamnia* between the estuaries of the Medway and the Thames. A gentleman, a native of the neighbourhood, described it as a wondrous spectacle to stand upon its highest point and watch the threatening tempest, and to see the black and menacing array, as it approached the district, suddenly dispart, and one detachment roll away above the tideway of the Thames and the other o'er the channel of the Medway.

A phenomenon like this the poet Shelley must have witnessed when he tells us the clouds—

"Chanting their thunder psalm,  
Leave azure chasms of calm."

This Circuit through that tempestuous year, 1850, was an "azure chasm of calm" amidst the almost universal stress and storm.

As the second minister must leave at Conference, the appointment of his successor was a matter of no slight solicitude. A man every way according to our mind and need, the Rev. T. C. Ingle, had consented to be stationed at our second place. Of him, too, it might be said, as of the old Judean ruler, "And that Seraiah was a quiet prince." He was a very eloquent, attractive preacher, who had commanded our best Circuits—a thoroughbred Wesleyan Methodist, and as loving and as lovable as his two sons, my own distinguished pupils: Matthew, now a minister, and John, the solicitor. As his bodily strength had shown symptoms of decline, he was allowed a young man as his assistant, and had secured the most popular probationer of the day, one Samuel Coley. We should thus gain a fourth minister. These two names appeared in the first two drafts of stations, and we were all elated and rejoicing for the consolation. We even took it as a certificate of good behaviour and encouragement to its continuance. As Mr. Ingle had not signed the Declaration, we judged it all the less likely that he would start questions that do gender strife.

But towards the close of Conference Mr. Ingle had become depressed and feeble, and felt constrained to request to be allowed to become a supernumerary. As this occurred but just before the confirmation of the stations, there was no time in the extra pressure of business to cast about for the next best man for the particular place at the peculiar time. So the very simple course was taken of stationing at the place a distinguished and most able brother, for whom no suitable appointment had as yet been found.

But, alas! the man was exquisitely unsuited to the place, and the place exceptionally the wrong one for the man. Not that the man came behind in any gift; in this he was well worthy to fall into the succession of God-honoured ministers who had laboured on the ground. Indeed, there was no Circuit in the wide Connexion to which his talents were not equal. He was a

powerful speaker, an erudite expositor, a scholar accurate and widely read, and a remarkably interesting personality altogether. *But* he had won the reputation of being the very apex of the ecclesiastic pyramid, and was known to be one of the most autocratic of mortals.

Four years before his appointment as a minister to this place of his spiritual nativity, he had published a book which, by the advice of Dr. Bunting, the Book Committee had declined. His heirarchic theory had developed during his decade of Circuit life, and had been the cause of his rapid survey of our Circuits, he having been appointed in the course of ten years to seven several Circuits; and in an autobiography of 319 pages he finds five pages sufficient for dealing with this part of his energetic life. With a touching, winning naïveté and simplicity he accounts for his unfitness for this kind of work.

Nevertheless, that unfitness proved most inopportune in the critical condition of Circuit and Connexion. It was impossible to persuade the people that the appointment was purely incidental; they interpreted it into a punitive discipline on those of them who had privately contributed to the fund for the relief of the three expelled.

On his arrival, his colleagues waited on him and informed him of the condition of the Circuit and the success of our efforts to preserve it from disruption. He was not unknown to either. The Superintendent had become acquainted with him in his youth, his father having been the family doctor for some years.

He and his future Methodist Superintendent had been rowed out together to gaze upon the most impressive spectacle of the captive Napoleon on board the *Bellerophon*.

I had previously met my new colleague in London and enjoyed some charming talk with him on literary matters, and had conceived for him a great admiration and regard.

He received his Superintendent and his junior colleague with the most formal courtesy and with marked aloofness and constraint. We told him that of course our people were disappointed, and perhaps a little sore, at missing the two choice men they had expected, but that his own great gifts would soon put that all right if combined with frank and cordial intercourse with the people in their homes, and especially at the family altar—where he had knelt in former years with the four most influential of them all, when he made his first surrender to the

Saviour. We expressed an earnest hope that he would abstain from any irritating obtrusion of his own peculiar ecclesiastic views. In reply, he drew himself up and answered autocratically, "I am not here to please the people, but to maintain the authority of the Conference."

We saw at once that it was throwing words away to reason with a man in such a mood as that, and we felt we "had our work set" between a disappointed and excited people and a colleague who, at the very best, seemed resolved to give us no assistance in our arduous task.

His appointment on the Sunday was to our third chapel in rank and in importance. It was a capital Methodist sanctuary with a close-packed congregation, and a hearty and attached Society of the true old Methodist type. We were, of course, in the midst of our September ticket-giving, so there were three Classes to be met in the afternoon. It was then the custom at the weekly ministers' meeting to give in to the Superintendent the numbers of the Classes we had met. When asked to report his numbers, our new colleague placed three class books on the table, informing us that he had no numbers to report. Having questioned the three Leaders as to whether they had contributed to the fund for the relief of the three expelled ministers, and being answered that they remembered to have done so twelve months ago, he had pronounced them to have by that very act excluded themselves from the Wesleyan Methodist Church, and had walked home with their Class books in his pocket and left the Classes to discuss the situation—a not very pleasant Sunday afternoon.

Now our Superintendent, though an old man and well stricken in years, throughout his long experience of ministerial life had never seen the like of this. He sat silent and aghast and trembling like an anxious Eli, as the shaking spectacles in his aged hands bore witness. Some of the members so ruthlessly and lawlessly excluded were poor old people in the union workhouse, who had never heard the names of Everett, Dunn, and Griffith. Of course, the Superintendent lost no time in restoring the Class books to the Leaders, but the effect of this high-handed manner of entering in among the people was most deplorable, both on them and on the work of God. Hitherto they had found us like our predecessors, "gentle among them, as a nurse cherisheth her children," but this lawless action was interpreted by all the fiery spirits as a declaration of war,



### *THE CONFERENCE OF 1850 AND ITS RESULTS.*

provoking terrible reprisals. For the first time we heard a mutter about stopping the supplies. One Leader, with his Class book and with all his members, betook himself to one of the minor Methodist bodies.

But this was not all. The new minister announced that he would preach in the principal chapel a series of sermons on the Epistles to the Seven Churches. In these sermons he put forth his lofty notions of the Pastoral sovereignty, sometimes in a most irritating form. Even in reading the lessons for the day he would suddenly interject sarcastic observations, which happily, however, by their audacity and pungency provoked amusement rather than exasperation. Thus after reading "Feed the flock of God that is among you, taking the oversight," he paused and exclaimed, with inimitable cynical grotesqueness, "Fancy a democracy of sheep!" The very gentle democrats who were sitting under the sound would have looked rather sheepish but for the consummate drollery of the exhibition.

This was very mild compared with other utterances. These sermons were, to a great extent, lectures on ecclesiastical polity or, rather, on the Prerogatives of the Pastorate and the obligations of the people. When a gentleman demurred to the highness of his theory he turned round on him and said: "Sir, if the people knew the power which the Head of the Church has given to her ministers, they would hoot at us in the streets."

The effect of all this was the opposite of tranquillising and uniting. Though only one member refused to give his ticket money, many lowered their subscriptions. Hitherto the Circuit had been far above the average of London and of the other wealthy towns in their sustentation of the ministry; they had set an example which the wealthiest societies—such as those in London, Liverpool, and, above all, Grosvenor Street, Manchester, when it still included Oxford Road—had not found in their heart to follow. Yet the largest part of the society were dockyard men, their wives and children. Throughout the Circuit there was not a single independent gentleman a member of this Society, and but one a seatholder. Yet with less than 1,200 members they had maintained three married ministers' families. This could only be accomplished by dint of thrift, a high standard of giving, and a loving attachment to their ministers. But now they took to reading the *Wesleyan Times* by the light of this brand-new working hypothesis of Pastoral prerogative, and the result proved matter of more sorrow than surprise.

At the Quarterly Meeting the Stewards reported an inauspicious falling off in the finances, which they felt themselves at a loss to meet. The support of three families had always proved a strain upon the Circuit, and now the people were out of heart and ill at ease on account of the appointment made by the last Conference, which, with regard to the peculiarities of the case, they could not but interpret as a penalty for their not having taken any part in the conflict then raging in the Conference, an interpretation which the new minister had done his utmost to confirm. Under present conditions they had no hope of keeping up the revenue of the Circuit, and they themselves were neither in a position nor a state of mind to supply the inevitable deficiency from their own very humble resources. They therefore saw no other way out of the difficulty than to decline to advance the allowances of the new minister and to request his withdrawal by the President, since they could not reconcile their minds to the injustice of lessening the maintenance of the other ministers, who had so successfully laboured to preserve and to build up the Church.

All this was clearly quite to the mind and taste of our new colleague. It was evidently the very thing he had been calculating upon. Notwithstanding the solemnity of the interests involved, I could not but look on with an amazement not unmingled with amusement. For his physique was the symbol of his remarkable psychology: he was square-built, thickset, sturdy, and unbending. Throughout the discussion he sat basking in the tempest, and reminded one of Smart's fine picture of the lion—

"Like a coal  
His eye the bastions mole,  
His breast against his foes.

There could be little doubt that, if his speech should follow next, it would be like the defiant roar of the rampant monarch of the forests. So when the junior Steward dropped his doleful parable I lost no time in putting the whole matter in the light of a faithful colleague. I showed them that it was impossible to isolate any one of three colleagues stationed in a Circuit; that if they did not give my colleague his money I should forthwith hand him over at least one-third of mine.

This move completely disconcerted both belligerents. In a moment my colleague came to me and said: "If I share your salary, you will share my sympathy." To which I calmly answered: "Of course, and your subsidy from Mr. Farmer's Fund

as well." The Superintendent also announced that he should transfer a third of his allowances to his colleague.

At last the whole proposal fell to the ground under the irresistible appeal of the noblest of the many noble men in that long favoured Circuit—a man whose gifts and character and inherited influence gave him a most legitimate and powerful purchase over every member of the meeting. His speech was like the still small voice after the hurricane at Horeb. He besought his brethren for the sake of the holy and beautiful house where their fathers had praised God, and of all the men and women now in glory who had devoted all to the cause which was now in peril, for the sake of all they had themselves sunk in this blessed undertaking, for the sake of their children in the Sunday school, not to plunge the Circuit into disturbance and disruption on account of temporary disappointment and passing irritation.

He spoke as if beneath a divine *afflatus*. I never, either before or since, saw anything so like one of the gracious interpositions under the old theocracy, when "the Spirit of the Lord came upon" some holy man of God, and he spake with irresistible authority and power. Yet there was no excitement nor gesticulation nor unearthly tone. He did not strive nor cry. The crowded meeting was completely overawed and utterly subdued. It resolved itself into a prayer-meeting, and division and the overt dissension were happily staved off. Nevertheless, the strained relation between the people and their ablest minister was sadly detrimental and obstructive to the work of God. It was as when the first mate is out of harmony with the captain. We did all we could to keep things *taut* and snug, but we could make no headway, as, under bare poles, we bore up staggeringly against wind and tide. At the March Quarterly Meeting the Stewards declared it necessary to give up one of the three ministers.

At the District Meeting our colleague brought a charge against his Superintendent of having betrayed the interests he was appointed to conserve. But I found it very easy to defend him upon every point. The Meeting passed a resolution unanimously, excepting the accuser, to the effect "That the Superintendent had managed the disturbed Circuit with great judiciousness and wisdom, amidst extraordinary difficulties, which had been seriously aggravated by the injudicious action of the second minister."

The Superintendent next appointed was as great a Preacher as was ever stationed in that favoured Circuit, and was a beloved former colleague of my own. I took care to "insense" him as to the condition of the Circuit, and also as to its essential fundamental loyalty to Methodism and its manageability, if not rubbed the wrong way. I introduced him to some of our disturbed but not impracticable people, and I spoke of him in the truest, and therefore in the highest, terms to all with whom I came in contact. I fondly hoped that the fine old Circuit might yet be saved from wreck. But my friend was, I think, the most incalculable man I ever knew. The safest forecast one could make, I found, about his probable procedure was: First, to ask oneself what course his antecedents would lead one to expect; and second, to assume that he would do the very opposite. This, at least, took place in the present instance. He had refused to sign the declaration; yet he preferred, as an administrator, to take the harsher way, when so far "love had done the deed." The result was the wrecking of one of the loveliest Circuits in the Kingdom. At this day, so near the closing of the century, that same Circuit has some 300 fewer members than it could report in the year 1850. As was foreseen and foresaid, this policy of preservation was very keenly criticised by those who advocated and applied more drastic measures; and as the Superintendent was known to be in failing health, the bulk of the blame was laid upon the shoulders of the youngest man. But over against this must be set two preponderating tributes. When Mr. T. P. Bunting, afterwards my fast and most forbearing friend, in the presence of his father spoke doubtingly about my Methodistic loyalty, the old general literally "fired up," and declared that I had faithfully maintained the law and discipline of Methodism against lawlessness on either side.

Five years later I was dining with Drs. Gervase Smith and Punshon and another popular minister, who during the agitation had as Superintendent slain his thousands, when the conversation somehow drifted in the direction of the then ended contest. Dr. Punshon playfully observed to me: "You were reckoned a little 'tainted' at that time." To which I replied: "Yes; but the whole secret of my policy was very simple. We were in a state of storm, and I knew that when the clouds had rolled away all that remained in the ship

would be glad they had not left; and that we should also thank God that we had lost no more. So I tried lawfully to keep the people together.

On which the renowned excisionist exclaimed: "What a mercy it would have been for Methodism if we had all looked at the matter in that light! In what a different state Methodism would now be!"

My next Circuit, Southampton, was a delightful instance of the triumph of moderation and forbearance, and a little judicious letting alone. My serene, meek-mannered colleague of 1849-50 had been appointed to the Superintendency of a Circuit containing three such towns as Southampton, Winchester, and Romsey. Southampton was at the turning-point of its history. It had just been chosen as the *entrepôt* of the steam navigation of the Empire, and the Methodists of the place, with a brave and faithful wisdom, most promptly resolved that this tide in their affairs should be taken at the flood. So they sold their little chapel in the Ditches, and built an exquisite new sanctuary in a leading thoroughfare; and now they were intent on filling it. They saw that this was a time to plant and a time to build, and not a time to pull down or to pluck up that which was planted. They were blest with a nursing father of a Superintendent and like-minded colleagues. The result was that not a dozen, all told, were lost to the Society. I found them as, through God's great mercy, I left them, in perfect unity. Their spirit was that of the verse:

"Oh! let us all join hand in hand,  
Who seek redemption through His blood,  
Fast in one mind and spirit stand,  
And build the temple of our God."

There was not a jarring string. The most popular of the three expelled, Mr. Griffith, held a meeting in a public room, but next to no one had the curiosity to hear him. His visit scarcely caused a ripple, and much less a ruffle, on the placid, fair expanse of our broad and bright Southampton water.

#### THE NEWCASTLE CONFERENCE OF 1851.

Immediately before the meeting of the Committees of Review at the Newcastle Conference of 1851, the President

invited some ninety selected laymen to confer with him in *Manchester* on the state and prospects of the Body. The selection of the place of meeting was significant. *Manchester* was not the most central or convenient place for the large proportion of the invited who were members of the Conference Committees, and it was clearly out of the way of most of them, especially in the then state of the railway system. But at that time it was the headquarters of the Methodist Management. The result was an undue preponderance to the Manchester side of Methodist politics. And that, unhappily, was somewhat changed from the days of the genial James Wood, who "hated electioneering practices." The Manchester District had more than three times the number of members on the committee than any of the rest, even London itself; reckoning in both cases those who, though residing a few miles out of town, had their businesses in either city. During the earlier part of the meeting the President was in the Chair, but after delivering a long and carefully prepared address, asked Dr. Bunting to take his place, as he was obliged to leave at once for a Connexional Committee in Newcastle. His speech, which now lies before me, is a strong dissuasive from concession and, indeed, a deterrent protest against all changes. Taken literally and logically, it was a severe condemnation of all the changes which had taken place since Wesley's death. But he closed admirably by saying: "*Claims must not be pushed on one side so far as to endanger our system by existing counter claims on the other. Let me express the honest feelings of my own heart: I do not say whether there ought or ought not to be a change; but if we could theorise and mend our system, and make it look a little more harmonious, what would it all amount to? The reform which I feel we all need is one which can only be effected by the blessed Spirit in our own souls.*"

The only speaker who seemed to fully realise the gravity of the situation was Mr. Farmer, who pointed to the fearful falling off of members, which he apprehended would be followed by a still greater. The Meeting passed four resolutions deploring the agitation, and leaving to the Conference the care of its own ministers, and cheerfully and entirely confiding in the wisdom, integrity, and liberality of the Conference, and respectfully requested their early consideration of the suggestions made by the present Meeting respecting the rules of the Body.

What those suggestions were is not recorded, but, in conjunction with memorials to the Conference, they were referred to a committee which met in February, 1852. One could not but regret that a committee of the like kind had not been appointed by the preceding Conference at the earnest entreaty of such men as John Scott, W. M. Bunting, G. B. Macdonald, and W. Arthur. It would have saved thousands of members, and a vast amount of irritation and bad blood.

The Conference of 1851, also, I attended. Dr. Hannah was the President. The delegates once more solicited the opening of some communication with the Conference in order to effect a healing of the breach. Dr. Beaumont pleaded in its favour with a subdued and tender but intense persuasiveness, in strong contrast with his usual and almost inevitable impetuosity, but quite without avail. But five out of five hundred voted in its favour. It has ever since been to me a cause of devoutest gratitude that I was one of that five. I voted out of regard to the seemly, venerable precedent of 1795, and to the sacred, binding relationship which had so lately existed between the members of the two assemblies.

The act which followed the easy counting of our little vote was, one would hope, unexampled in any free fraternal convocation. The President rose up and said: "Will the brethren who have voted for this stand up, that we may see who they are?"

At a subsequent session Mr. Steward solemnly protested against such a violent attempt to intimidate and abash the freedom of voting, which it was part of the President's most solemn duties to protect. This certainly appeared a unique contrivance for refuting the wicked slanders about the repression of freedom of speaking and voting in the Conference. The representative of a District, when we broke up, said to me: "I know at least two hundred men then sitting in the Conference who think as you do on the question." To the very natural question: "Why did not you vote as I voted?" he replied: "I daren't"; to which I answered, "I dared not but vote."

It was to this, however, that I owed the beginning of my long, close friendship with William Morley Punshon. He introduced himself to me upon the strength of it, and expressed his strong disapprobation of this attempt of the Chair itself to interfere with the freedom and honesty of voting in the Conference. By far the ablest and most popular of the young men

that year ordained, he came down from the gallery into my pew at the far back, and stamped and beat the back of his hand against the woodwork, and declared he would not be enrolled amongst a body of ministers where such an act was possible. It required all my persuasive power and that of his father and uncle, who were both present, to prevent his going away in a rage.

The fact that a perfect gentleman like the President could allow himself so far to forget both his office and himself is of no small thermometric and barometric value and significance. It shows to what a tropical degree the heat of conflict had risen, and what a portentous atmospheric pressure was weighing on the Conference.

Throughout the next three years the contest raged, but happily with an ever-decreasing decrease of members. The numerical downfall reported in the Minutes for 1852 was another 20,946; in 1853 the concessions recommended by the Ministerial Committee of the Conference and the mixed convention of ministers and laymen, and adopted by the Conference, reduced the defection to less than half that number, 10,290; in 1854 it again fell by nearly half to 6,797; and again in 1855 to 3,310. So in five years the Connexion was depleted by 100,469.

" Shall these things be,  
And overpass us like a summer cloud  
Which we regard not? "

To me this devastation was, perhaps, especially distressing, as it laid waste some of the fairest and most fruitful Circuits in Methodism, on which I or my father or grandfather had looked with exultant thankfulness, and had laboured with success and shouting, bringing our sheaves with us. Many a time, on revisiting those scenes, or brooding o'er the tidings of their trampling down by the hoof of fierce fraternal conflict, have I exclaimed :

" Oh, holy mountain of my God,  
How do thy towers in ruin lie?  
How art thou *riven and strewn abroad*  
Beneath the rude and wasteful sky? "

Yes, "*strewn abroad*" as well as "*riven*," for the worst of it was that of the more than 100,000 lost, full 60,000 were missing, and only 40,000 found their way into the new enclosure.



## CHAPTER X.

### DR. BUNTING'S POLICY.

Dr. Bunting: "My friends overstate my case; I could state it better myself."

"WHAT was Dr. Bunting's Policy?" It is agreed on all hands that throughout the period we are studying "Methodist politics," as Mr. T. P. Bunting most truly and intelligibly calls them, revolved around one central and colossal figure: Jabez Bunting. In his last message to the Conference, 1857, he says: "Tell the Conference I regard *my policy* to have been right." But what was Dr. Bunting's policy? This question has never been answered, so far as I know. In the "Life of Dr. Bunting" it is not even put, much less settled. Scattered and unconsolidated intimations and fragmentary, disjected materials for an answer may be picked up on the tide-left beach of controversial chronicle; but these *disjecta membra* have not been *pieced together* in a recognisable, a realisable, and vital unity; although he is universally admitted to have been the greatest ecclesiastical statesman that Methodism has produced. To answer this question is one of the purposes, and I trust one of the utilities, of this book.

But the essential preliminary question is: "Who is to supply the answer?" Surely Dr. Bunting *himself*. His expostulation: "My friends overstate my case; I could state it better myself," ought certainly to be regarded. But did he ever state it himself? He did so, with his characteristic explicitness and emphasis, in his speeches in Conference and in Connexional Committees, which are rescued recently from the stuffed-out wallet of oblivion by the intuitive appreciation of Mr. Fowler. Dr. Bunting might well endorse the authenticity and value of Mr. Fowler's Conference Journal, for it is to that inestimable muniment that the public and posterity must mainly be indebted for a concrete conception of Dr. Jabez Bunting in his most historical capacity—as statesman and debater.

It must, however, in all justice to that great and good man, be first noted that he possessed in a very high degree what may be called the essential *presuppositions* of a leader of the people called Methodists. He could have as truly said "I *live*," as he sent word to the Conference, "I die in the true faith of Evangelical Arminianism. I am a *true Methodist*." He was, first of all, that without which no man can possibly be a truthful Wesleyan Methodist *Preacher*, either lay or ministerial—a firm believer in, and a faithful preacher of, the doctrines embodied in the standards by which we hold alike our office and our right to occupy a Wesleyan Methodist pulpit.

As he himself tells us, in the discussion on James Caughey, he began his ministry as a *revivalist*, and was such as a Local-preacher. He was built and born to be and to do the work of an evangelist. His physique and his psychology alike, his commanding presence, his manly elocution, and his mighty voice had designated him for that intensely apostolic work. Hence, notwithstanding the vast difference between him and William Bramwell in calibre and culture and their views of Methodist administration, they were true yokefellows in the work of the Lord.

The *Liverpool Minutes*, his composition in 1820, is, as a manual of stable, systematic, and successful evangelism, a document which for the last seventy-seven years has been regarded as almost a part of the Constitution of Wesleyan Methodism.

But the first recorded announcement of his fundamental Church principle which I have ever met with was elicited by the debate on the Rochdale Address with regard to the proceedings on the Leeds Organ case. His speech on that occasion makes the supreme authority of the Pastorate the one essential principle of ecclesiastical polity, which, being secured, all other things were mere details and matters of expediency and easiest working.

In Dr. Bunting's view the Superintendent of the Circuit is "the Angel of the Church," and as such is responsible to God and man for the order and the purity of that portion of the household of faith, the supreme authority of the Pastorate being thoroughly secured. Again, the Circuit Stewards are the ministers of the Superintendents. What this precisely means is difficult to determine. This dictum makes the Stewards the officers of the pastors. But the *Circuit* Steward, as is implied by his very designation, is a *Circuit* official, and his mode of induction to

office shows that he belongs alike to pastor and to people. In the corresponding office the Established Church splits the difference, regarding one churchwarden as belonging to the clergy and the other to the people. With us they both are equally related to the one and to the other.

Dr. Bunting has the great honour of originating the mixed committees of combined ministers and laymen. This was a sagacious and statesmanly stroke, and showed all the greater sagacity and statesmanship from being initiated and developed in a very tentative and cautious manner. At first the mixed committee *was*—I do not say *was meant* to be—a strong seawall against popular encroachment on pastoral prerogative. Unquestionably, Dr. Bunting was too great and good a man not to foresee or not to purposely contemplate the countless practical advantages of this arrangement. It is remarkable that the most important of all the powers and functions committed to a mixed committee of ministers and laity—that of the *trial of a minister for immorality or incompetence*—was the earliest, and has been the least used. The mixed District Meeting for this purpose, comprising a large lay element of stewards and others, was created in 1794 and embodied in the Plan of Pacification in 1795-97. This was five years before Jabez Bunting walked to his first Circuit (Oldham) as a probationer for the ministry. And by the year 1812 the presence of the Circuit Stewards at the annual District Meeting had become the regular and established usage. On the formation of the Missionary Society, and the appointment of a Missionary Committee in 1815, the Lay Treasurer was made a member of the General Committee, and soon afterwards "nine *respectable* laymen" were made members of the Committee of Finance.

This principle was gradually, and after successive intervals, extended to the other Funds; to the Schools Fund through Mr. Scott. But the *representative* principle was by Dr. Bunting most resolutely resisted. He contended strongly that all lay admission, even into the *financial* management of Connexional Funds, must be by *selection* on the part of the ministers; *not* by *election* on the part of the people. And the principle of *natural* selection was naturally brought into play. As in the lay Committees of Advice called by Presidents at critical moments, so in these stately appointed committees, laymen were not likely to be chosen who would probably oppose the course which their selectors were most solicitous to carry. As we have seen, the

first germ of the representative principle began to appear in respect to particular parts of the Connexion at a later period. It was not till 1851 that the Conference consented to take into consideration the extending of this principle to the Connexional Funds generally.

Another principle of Dr. Bunting's policy was his doctrine that "*the wish of a Superintendent*" as to *who should be his colleagues should outweigh, in the decision of the Conference, the wish of the people expressed by the Circuit Stewards as to who should be their minister.* And with this agreed his strongly expressed objection to the alteration of the Stationing Committee's first draft, except when imperatively required by circumstances, or cause was shown by members of the Conference. The remonstrances of Circuit Stewards with him had little weight as against the judgment of the Stationing Committee.

As to Dr. Bunting's unparalleled career in Conference, it is very interesting and still more important to note that he began as a reformer and as the banner-bearer of young Methodism. At the critical meeting in Manchester, preparatory to the Conference of 1851, Dr. Bunting frankly declared: "I am a reformer of forty years' standing." And there was much more truth than playfulness in the avowal, paradoxical as, to some, it sounds from the lips of Dr. Bunting. All depends on what is legitimately meant by the word *reformer*. Its honest meaning, as applied alike to Luther and Earl Grey, is: "*An innovator with a view to improvement and by fair and constitutional means.*" Jabez Bunting had for forty years long (1811-51) been the greatest innovator in the whole Connexion. He was a *Tribune* before he was Consul. He began as Leader of "the Opposition," and may be almost said to have created the Opposition which he led. In my own young days the old Preachers, his coevals, took delight in personating the young orator, as he drew himself up to his full height, realising Goldsmith's picture of the normal Englishman:

"Pride in his port, defiance in his eye,  
I see the ruler of the world go by."

They in turn would straighten themselves with a dramatic dignity and recite: "I know that many of my honoured fathers will oppose me, but my younger brethren will support me." His great success was the admission of a ten years' man into

the Hundred through the vote of ten years' men, of which the immediate and certain sequence was his own elevation to that signal honour upon the shields of his coevals.

Yes, Jabez Bunting was essentially a reformer in the true sense—"the innovator with a view to improvement." But did not this make the bitter denunciation of a Methodist reformer, *as such*, which was so common in that troubled time, all the more discreditable, unreal, exasperating, and unfair? At a District Meeting at that very time, on protesting against violence of language in prayer as well as speaking, I was answered by the Secretary of the Meeting: "I say, I had rather be a drunkard reeling in the street than a Methodist reformer." To which I answered: "Mr. Chairman, I am sorry to be able to believe my beloved brother in that sad confession."

Dr. Bunting was appointed the first Assistant Secretary to the Conference in 1806, on the recommendation of the President, Dr. Adam Clarke ("Life," p. 713). He had just completed the seventh year of his mighty ministry. At this very Conference, from his Sub-Secretarial desk, he spoke on a case of *discipline*, and, in opposition to the earnest recommendations of the President, urged that the offender should be *dismissed* (*ibid.*, 257).

Thus he was no sooner in office than he was in opposition, and that to the highest officer and the most eminent minister in the whole Conference. My revered father was present, and a witness of these wonders.

The published Minutes of the Conference of 1807 contain evidence of his anxiety to introduce gradually some "*changes in the administration*" (*ibid.*, 271). Among these was requiring the attendance of all probationers at Conferences for personal examination.

In Dr. Bunting's policy, by which he says "I mean my course of action," the supreme authority of the Pastorate was, to all practical intents and purposes, *the Constitution* underlying all documentary elements, whether settlements, *plans of pacification*, reciprocal regulations, enactments of the Conference, or what not. If at any time any such settlements, plans, regulations, enactments, precedents, or what else, should hamper or imperil that supreme authority, *they*, not *it*, must give way. This was the gist of his speech from the Chair of the Conference in defence of the innovating and irregular treatment of the Leeds dissensions, of which the "Life of

Dr. Bunting" asserts him to have been the directive and decisive agent. This, too, in the Minutes published in 1828, is made the justification of the undenied departures from the settlement in the *Plan of Pacification* in 1795 and the *Leeds Regulations* in 1797. That justification is simply and plainly that, however divergent from or discrepant with the documentary constitution it might be, it was indispensably necessary, and constitutional also, in an "extraordinary emergency;" that very extraordinary emergency being precisely the emergency which those special rules were carefully devised to meet.

And in what consisted the indispensable necessity for the infringement of those rules? It was clearly the fear lest, if those rules or regulations were faithfully adhered to, the supreme authority of the Pastorate would be thereby obstructed or endangered. According to this hypothesis, not only do circumstances alter cases but circumstances alter constitutions. Is one party to a "settlement" bound by that settlement, and the other not?

Again, the Minutes on *discipline*, published in 1829, thus modified the adherence of the Conference to the Plan of Pacification and the Leeds Regulations, which were rightly regarded as the *Magna Charta* and the Bill of Rights of the Methodist Constitution. They were binding only "as explained by the action of Conference." Some of the Preachers and many of the people found it hard to understand how a distinct departure from those regulations could be an explanation of those regulations. It seemed to them to bear too strong a resemblance to the mode in which the Vatican observes the Scriptures—not as taken in their simple, obvious, and straightforward sense but as explained by its own action. Hence resulted the petitions for an authorised explanation of our rules.

All these petitions, we have seen, Dr. Bunting steadily resisted and successfully staved off. Anything like a digest, codification, or authorised compendium he instinctively eschewed. If the Constitution and the law be definitively explained by the authority itself in such wise as to shut out all ambiguity or possibility of two opposed constructions, then the meaning of a law can no longer be determined by the action of the Conference; but, on the contrary, the action of the Conference must itself be determined by its own explanation of the Constitution and the law.

The *primary* point in dispute in the disastrous Leeds business was this: Is the Conference itself bound by its own law, so long as that law remains? Or may a law mean one thing at one time and the direct opposite at another, and so turn and turn about, according to the "emergency"?

Take, for example, the essential part of our economy which, next to the Class meeting, the Conference, and the Circuit, is the oldest and most central part of our economy—the Quarterly Meeting. Although the necessity of defining the composition of the Quarterly Meeting emerged at every crisis of our history, and was pressed as a necessity by such men as Mr. James Wood of Manchester, Dr. Bunting stoutly and successfully preclosed the question, so that the Quarterly Meeting could not get to know who had the right to help to discharge its important Church functions, or to be helped to its hearty Christmas dinner, till the year of grace 1852.

By the Conference of 1808 the inconvenience of an unstratified aggregation of laws had become so fretting that three of the most judicious brethren were appointed to compile a digest: Wood, Reece, and Lomas. A difference of opinion had arisen between Mr. Wood and the two others as to whether the explanation of the reason and purpose of each rule and the historical occasion of its enactment should be given along with the rule itself, or in a general preface. Dr. Bunting strongly took the former view, and greatly rejoiced that such a digest was forthcoming. His son explains his subsequent aversion to any systematic arrangement of our laws "to the fear that it would reveal actual redundancy and theoretical defectiveness," and that this "would probably occasion discussion and difficulty" (p. 303). But his speeches in deprecation of the measure, and the events which called forth alike the demand for it and his objection to it, point much more clearly in the direction I have indicated. Another of Dr. Bunting's principles he thus expressed:—

"We must not have the tyranny of the Hundred, or raise them above others. If so, we should have two bodies: one to do as they please, the other to do as they are bid." Mr. Bromley replied: "I have re-read lately the Deed Poll, and cannot recall any clause in that instrument which gives power to a District Meeting to forbid any member of the Legal Conference to be in his place in that body during any of its sessions."

Mr. Bunting: "We all submit to the regulations of 1791, and have determined to use our privileges in submission to the Conference."

Dr. Warren: "Then why must we, year by year, grant a dispensation to the absent members of the Legal Conference? *From what do we dispense*

*them but from the duty of being in their places in the Conference? Has not a member of the Legal Conference, as well as any other man, an absolute right to do his duty—if he can?"*

Mr. Bunting: "The dispensation is simply granted to show that we approve of what the District Meeting has done. If we have not a quorum, we must adjourn till the nearest members of the Hundred can be got."

These deliverances are highly illustrative of Dr. Bunting's daring and adroitness in debate. They exemplify the dexterity with which he could start a side-issue that afforded him occasion to pronounce a judgment. The relation of the Legal Conference to the rest of the Conference was not the question before the House. That was, moreover, a question of far too great importance to be dogmatically decided by a few offhand and parenthetical pronouncements. The case before the Conference was that of a very young man who, after his colleagues had left him in charge of a highly important and disturbed Circuit, had given himself a dispensation to leave the Circuit to take charge of itself.

In the earlier part of his Conferential career he was the assailant of what he thought might look like, or look in the direction of what he justly denounced as "tyranny"—the having in Conference two bodies; "one to do as they please, and the other to do as they are bid." But many thought and felt that the real danger did not lie in the direction towards which he pointed. It seemed to them that if "tyranny," as thus described so aptly, *was to be endured at all*, the Legal Conference might be most fairly and most safely left to exercise that tyranny. Were they not the most tried and experienced men of the entire fraternity? Among them sat the still-surviving elders who had outlived the Methodist Joshua. They had so far given not the slightest ground for jealousy. On the contrary, they had presented to the Conference all the privileges that could possibly be parted with in anything like consistency with Wesley's Deed Poll, by which the Conference itself was constituted a legally recognised corporation, with authority to control both property and persons. Besides "The Hundred" was a tangible, substantive, ascertainable organism. Their names were written and read over; all their brethren knew who and what they were.

Above all, they were an *elected* body, installed by the vote of their brethren. They were not locally congested. They were scattered all over the three kingdoms, from Bandon to Hull, and from Newcastle to Penzance. They had no facilities



for "laying their heads together" and taking on their shoulders, already overburdened with their departmental duties, "the care of all the churches."

In the eyes of men like Mr. Fowler, the danger of a cleavage in the Conference into two sections, "those who do as they please, and those who do as they are bid," lay in quite another quarter. What they feared, and fought against with manful honesty, was the gradual growing up of an un-nominated, unelected, unamenable, intangible, unresponsive governing body, who could not be "brought to book."

But Dr. Bunting, as he gathered power and influence, too often, as we have seen, manifested impatience of animadversion and inquiry, and still more of opposition, to any project or proposal of his own, whether in the Conference or in the committees of the two departments of which he had the special charge—the Missionary and the Theological Institutions. As to both these, the first great duty of a member of committee was, in his view, to "repose confidence in the officers." Busy men, with a sense of personal responsibility and with duties of their own, felt as if this reposeful trust might be fulfilled at home without stirring from the study or the counting-house. They were like the gentlemen of Bristol, who did not "care" to leave behind their families and merchandise, take a drive to Kingswood, receive assurances that nothing could be better managed, shake hands with the Governor, enjoy a hearty dinner, and then return. It reminded them of the historic expedition, when—

"Ten thousand men marched up the hill,  
And then marched down again."

The range of subjects on which demur to any contemplated action was admissible was restricted to the narrowest limits. Was a minister to be sent as deputation to the mission-field, any doubt as to the fitness of the selection was summarily put down as an infringement on the "rights of *Conference*." On all such subjects, if not approval, at least assent or acquiescence was to be the committee man's "unbounded duty." And on general questions the officials "must know better" than anybody else had any "business" to know what was wisest to be done. Anything like a strenuous objection was construed into a vote of want of confidence. This position was distinctly taken up by Dr. Bunting. "Hitherto I have met with the approval of

my brethren ; if they do not approve of this particular action, I will retire from all my offices." An inquiring brother found himself under the definition of a note of interrogation : "A *little crooked thing* that asks questions." Once assumed to be such, the minority must be *mum*. "We are the majority ; why can't you let us alone?" was Dr. Bunting's answer to all inquiring friends on the other side of the house. For there were inevitably two sides, if not more, to this house as well as every other, as there were at least two sides to every question of importance brought before it. There was no *need* to be two "*parties*." Thus far my friend Dr. Osborn was quite right in his speech in justification of his "test" ; but if it must *needs be that parties* come, why, the reason is the same as that why "offences must needs come." Or "whence" do they come? Come they not even of the same parentage as "wars and fightings," which so often follow in their train? and, therefore, "Woe unto *that man by whom* they come" in a Christian Church.

But side-taking does not become *party* in any blamable or hurtful sense until it generates, or unless it is itself generated by, a party spirit. So long as the word simply indicates a certain point of view, such as "the court party" and "the country party," there is no more harm in party than in the hemispheres of an orange. A minority becomes a *faction* in the same way in which a Cabinet degrades itself into a cabal by the employment of indirect, unworthy methods for strengthening its power and furthering its purpose.

In a large body like the Conference, composed of men called out from among their fellows on account of some marked individuality of intellect and character, there cannot fail to be two sides in Conference. Even when no one came there but by Wesley's invitation, there was a strong Church side and a stout Nonconforming side. So when Dr. Bunting's "policy" took shape, and became pronounced and positive and peremptory, and began to claim allegiance to itself under the title of "Methodism as it is," this naturally, and necessarily, called forth a band of honest, independent thinkers and talkers, who strove to put the brake upon the wheels of the Royal Mail or fast express when some danger signal came in sight. These good and noble men I personally knew. I looked up to them, and listened to them, and studied them, and stored up their utterances, their mannerisms, and the impression of their

personality. Forty years ago I conceived the idea of writing "The Lives of the Liberals in the Wesleyan Methodist Ministry," including Daniel Isaac, Jacob Stanley, William Atherton, Samuel Jackson, Valentine Ward, J. P. Haswell, and, above all, the three most persistent and most effective of them all—Joseph Fowler, Thomas Galland, and Dr. Beaumont. These "were all gallant men and true" as ever "hung their shields" in knightly hall. They were as honest Methodist Preachers, as devoted to Methodism, and as deserving well of Methodism as, and were no more chargeable with faction than, those whom they confronted. But Mr. Stanley's opposition was intermittent, that of Mr. Atherton was sluggish and spasmodic. The principle of them all was expressed by Mr. Galland: "I fear extremes, but I think the extreme of Radicalism is worse than the extreme of Conservatism."

Another of Dr. Bunting's principles was: "A Methodist minister has the right, though not to expel a member from the society, yet to forbid him the Lord's Supper, without the formality of a Leaders' Meeting."

"The Conference is the living Wesley."

Our readers will have no difficulty in gathering from Dr. Bunting's speeches other fundamental principles and the animating spirit of his policy; I need only further name the most decisive.

A very salient point in Dr. Bunting's policy was to *strengthen and extend the authority and power of the executive*—such as Chairmen of the Districts.

In short, the aim and merit of Dr. Bunting's statesmanship was to *solidify* and to *consolidate* the whole economy of Methodism, and to give to our economy *homogeneity, cohesion, vigour, and effectiveness*. This was an aim worthy of the honourable and enlightened attention of the ablest of the sons of Methodism. But, alas!

"The best-laid schemes of mice and men  
Gang oft agley."

As every man has the faults of his excellences and the weaknesses of his powers, so every policy and polity has the perils of its own advantages. *Consolidation* tends to concentration, concentration to *congestion*, congestion leads to inflammation, paroxysm and convulsion, and collapse. One chief charge against Dr. Bunting's policy was that it tended towards and

resulted in crude centralisation, and thus checked the healthy distribution both of function and of power.

For some years Mr. Fowler kept notes of proceedings in Committees. I give a few extracts which cast light upon the policy of Dr. Bunting, which was just as marked as in the Conference, as was also his capacity for affairs.

At the three meetings of the committee on the Centenary celebration Dr. Bunting was, of course, the presiding genius. Yet he was cautious, and desirous rather of eliciting lay opinion than of pressing ministerial preferences. He saw that it must be for the most part a layman's movement. But he insisted upon two points: "The result must be something monumental, something visible, that our people can look at and that will impress the public with the greatness of our gratitude and the greatness of our ability. Better have no collection at all, but only devotional and edifying services, than a pitiful amount which should expose our inability. It must be on such a scale as would take hold on the hearts of our people, so that they would give to it magnificently. We must build a memorial and a testimonial sufficiently large to be imposing and impressive to the present and to the future generations: either an ample and commodious Mission House or Theological Institution, or both. Both are urgently needed. Our present Mission House is insufficient. I find it impracticable to get through my own part of the work much longer without a room to myself. Whichever we build must have at its entrance a fine marble statue of John Wesley." This last was accomplished ten years later by the munificence of Mr. Farmer.

Dr. Bunting held that the great purpose of the Theological Institution, next to the training of the future ministry in Methodist doctrine, history, and polity, must be the correction of awkwardnesses or unattractive habits in young Preachers.

The laymen who really struck the keynote to that munificent thanksgiving and the wise, brave policy of attempting great things for God, were Mr. Farmer, of London, and Mr. James Wood, of Manchester.

Mr. T. P. Bunting asked whether it was contemplated to found a great establishment for the education of both ministers and laymen.

Dr. Bunting: "That, if possible, would be a glorious consummation. It was what Mr. Wesley aimed at in building Kingswood." This was also the view of Mr. Farmer. Mr. Fowler and Mr. Burgess pleaded for the relief of overburdened trusts.

Mr. Riggall said: "If the Preachers be united in their judgment, they can lead the people. I will act in unison with my brethren. I cannot vote in favour of the Institution; but if my brethren decide in favour of it, I shall support it."

At the Missionary Committee of Review, 1839, Mr. Galland asked the Secretaries a question which he thought it was not disrespectful to ask, as to the communication which had been addressed to the Mission House on Canadian affairs.

Dr. Bunting: "There is nothing disrespectful in the question; but it is one that requires deliberation. A member of either House may ask a question of her Majesty's Ministers, but it may not be proper for them to answer. The reason of my silence is: I doubt whether the committee has a right to institute such inquiries. The Conference is the proper place for a question between the Secretaries and Mr. Ryerson."

Mr. R. (our representative to Canada): "All was amicably settled in Canada."

Dr. Bunting: "I think not; matters are still in a very unsettled, restless state."

Mr. Galland: "I think a wise economy has been exercised. I have only one thing to notice: I have a conscientious objection to men remaining in the office of Secretary for so many years. I think it will prove injurious to Methodism."

Mr. Chapell: "Why part with a good servant?"

Dr. Bunting: "As Mr. Galland talks about his conscience, I will tell what I believe in my conscience—namely, that I am fitter for the station at present than any other man, simply because I have had experience. I think it would take any man at least three years to learn what I have learnt in six years. If I did not believe this, I would not remain Secretary. It is a great tax on my time and domestic comfort. I think the principle unsound; there might be a necessity for a man to remain in office."

Mr. Reece: "I think the amount of expenditure on the Mission premises requires a little explanation."

Mr. Farmer: "I would have the letter read which Mr. Galland asks about."

Mr. Wood, of Manchester: "I oppose the reading; because this committee does not wish it, and because I have full confidence in all the London Committee does."

Mr. Galland: "I think it a matter of regret that the Methodist documents should first meet the public eye through a hostile medium."

Dr. Bunting: "The letter is neither very good nor bad; neither black nor white, but good brown ochre. It procured us £1,200. Since it has been asked about, I would have it read." It was read.

Mr. Marriott: "I think £25,000 too large an expenditure on the new Missionary premises. I believe the premises themselves were obtained cheaply; but an amount almost equal to the purchase money has been expended since."

Mr. Farmer: "The additional expenditure is caused by the alterations necessary for adapting the premises to their present purpose."

Dr. Bunting: "That expenditure did not come out of the Society's income, but from the Centenary Fund. The question for us now is: Can we take so many missionaries with a deficiency of £10,000?"

At the *Committee of the Theological Institution* it was stated that two students from Hoxton were the most popular men in their Circuit.

On this Mr. Galland questioned the judiciousness of making such a comparison between young men fresh from the Institution and some of the best Preachers in the Connexion. He thought the Institution itself would be more popular if some of the students were less dogmatic.

Dr. Bunting: "This is a new and intolerable mode of remark. There are men who, under pretence of being honest, say things coarse and rude."

Mr. Galland: "Nothing I have said deserves the epithets 'intolerable, coarse, and rude.' Those words are much more applicable to a charge upon a brother minister of a *pretence* of honesty, in having simply done his duty as a member of the committee."

Dr. Beaumont questioned the necessity of separating an additional minister from Circuit work to a tutorship at the Institution.

Dr. Bunting: "The ruin of Methodism is for men to be going lionising about the country to Missionary anniversaries and chapel openings instead of attending to their own Pastoral work."

Dr. Beaumont thought that one remedy for this was that the eminently capable Missionary Secretaries should relieve the less qualified brethren of a larger amount of this Connexional service than they are accustomed to. "It is a serious matter of regret that the surpassing powers of Dr. Bunting as a Preacher should be almost lost to Methodism."

So there was no small sparring in this Centenary year!

Dr. Bunting: "I hate the words Senior Secretary; and hope I shall hear no more of them."

At the *General Book Committee* before the Conference of 1836, attention was called to certain articles in the Magazine, which were said to have given offence on account of the feeling manifested in them.

Dr. Bunting: "I enter my protest against such an objection. I have not heard of it before. The articles show that a lie is a lie. It is easy to intrude into a battle. A combatant must strike; if your head and heart be in the way, you must take the consequence. What feeling? Ought we not to feel indignation against such proceedings? I would always take the highest ground in the controversy against Popery everywhere."

The Editor: "Certainly the articles have not complimented the Radicals."

Mr. Galland quoted certain recriminatory sentences which he thought exceptionable. He said: "An intermixture of religion and politics in a denominational organ requires great nicety of handling. I fear extremes;

but I think the extreme of Radicalism is worse than the extreme of Conservatism. I have confidence in Mr. Jackson."

Dr. Bunting: "I would have us guard against too much entertainment in our publications. Religion is a serious thing. The attempt to make religion entertaining has not succeeded. We must include general literature, not politics. We have access to the largest class of society. Lord Brougham's magazine was the wisest measure ever adopted for his purpose. Let us profit by his example. Is it not important to have articles on chemistry free from materialism; *religious*, and yet free from Calvinism? These are times to adopt the Press for doing good."

At the Schools Committee, Dr. Bunting said: "The best way to learn English grammar is to learn Latin. There can be no perfect grammarian without it. Let other learning go rather than it."

At the Missionary Committee Mr. Rule's request of £450 from the Missionary Committee to enable him to print a Commentary on the Gospels was again declined for want of funds. Several matters in relation to our African Mission were made the subject of remark and censure.

Dr. Bunting: "Details are of comparatively no importance. The question now is whether we are to go on at all, or not. I think we really must recall some sixty missionaries. There are three aspects under which our mission work is legal. (1) Is the Divine blessing on them? Five thousand seven hundred increase this year makes it evident that they have not fallen out of favour with God. (2) Our *income* makes it plain that we have not fallen out of favour with man. (3) The debt can be managed. Having raised £200,000, we can, if we will, pay off £30,000, if our opulent friends will act as they profess to believe. But we should not generally depend upon our opulent friends, nor on a few pounds additional. There is one thing *we must* give up, and that is *boasting*. That is our first sacrifice. I am sorry to see so much puffing in the *Watchman*. Breakfast meetings should not be for speechifying, but for confessing our sins. We must have no oratory. I can do nothing in that way."

Some anxiety was expressed for the personal safety of our missionary in Spain. The inquirer was reassured by being told, "The missionary will not be murdered, though he may be assassinated."

*Missionary Committee*, July. Dr. Bunting expressed himself very strongly on the short term of missionary service. He said: "It will ruin the work." A long discussion on the evils of the return of missionaries, leaving vacated stations.

Dr. Bunting again expressed his strong conviction that missionaries should go out for life, though in special cases they might be permitted to return.

At a meeting of the Committee of Privileges Mr. Fowler called attention to the fact that a clergyman had refused to bury a child baptised by a Wesleyan minister. Mr. President was in the Chair, but Dr. Bunting took up the case.

J. Fowler said: "If our people cannot have their grievances redressed, we had better hand them over to the Church again."

Dr. Bunting took offence at this, and said: "Our people must be willing to suffer wrong for Methodism's sake. I should feel this no offence in my own case. If Parliament were sitting, I should bring the case before it. But we must not have a brawler to introduce it. No notice would be taken of him. If his be a strong case, I would memorialise the Government. We might tell them that if these things go on we will join the Dissenters to petition against Church and State. What Mr. Fowler said is in the spirit of pettishness. We cannot afford a lawsuit in every case. Some person said he would give £50 in the Gedney case. Has it ever been seen since?" The conclusion was that the committee could not countenance going to law.

J. Farrar: "I cannot concur in leaving our pulpits. If that can be arranged for, I will remain at Richmond."

Dr. Bunting: "No Tutor should take that ground. We must conform to what will be for the well-being of the Institution. I do not like an establishment in which servants do as they please." Mr. Farrar: "I complain that Dr. Bunting has misrepresented me." Mr. Jackson: "The Institution must not suffer on any plea whatever."

*Book Committee.* Mr. Rule's MS. on "Methodism" to be read by Fowler, Crowther, McLean, and Prest.

The former part of the MS. (dealing with early Methodism) was approved of, but the latter part, which dealt with the present position and relations of the Body, was not so satisfactory. Negotiations ensued which were so protracted that the work did not see the light till three years later, as "*Wesleyan Methodism* Regarded as the System of a Christian Church."

*Book Committee.* Dr. Bunting: "Mr. Rule's book on Methodism contains pages of exquisite beauty and great power, equal to some of Watson's most brilliant passages. But—but—it is not proper to be published." Some sparring took place between Dr. Bunting and Mr. Fowler about the Conference understanding as to the Marriage Act.

It was my good hap to be there to see this sparring between two such doughty athletes. And a smart bit of "science" it was, quite characteristic of the combatants: Fowler wary, quick-eyed, imperturbable; Bunting downbearing and impetuous and irresistible, except by the prompt persistence of a man who always



stood his ground, because he knew the ground on which he stood. But I have described the scene elsewhere.

A letter was read from Mr. Cryer, of Madras, stating that on his outward voyage, although on taking his passage his profession was stated, he was not allowed to perform any religious service, nor even to pray with and offer consolation to the dying. In addition to the passengers and crew, there were 600 soldiers on board. The only reason given was that he was not *episcopally* ordained.

Dr. Bunting: "We should be careful. I see that the devil has two aims by the present movement: (1) To excite bigotry and persecution; (2) to make those angry who are the subjects of persecution. I think he is succeeding in both these aims. We must avoid what is vindictive. All controversies are productive of great evils."

J. Fowler maintained that no member of the Committee wished to be vindictive, or even discourteous to the men, but we could scarcely bear too hard upon a *system* which denies to a Methodist minister what it allows to pernicious errors.

Dr. Bunting: "The controversy against Antinomianism did a deal of harm; well nigh made us semi-Pelagians."

J. Fowler: "It quite saved us from Antinomianism. But let us see how long Dr. Bunting will keep to his present view about controversy."

Dr. Bunting: "I think it would be a sin to send a missionary to China while we have so few missionaries, and so many open doors, in India. I think Providence has sent home Mr. Arthur to convince us of this. Let us have no Methodistical bigotry, and interfere with the London Mission to China. That will prevent our wishing them success. I am solemnly in earnest about India. My happiest moment, excepting that of my conversion, was when I offered myself for India. I have no particular reason to be dissatisfied with my station at home; but I believe that if I had gone I should have been happier. I believe that in validity of orders, and accurate views of truth and Church principles, we are equal, if not superior, to others; but missionary zeal is not given to the Methodists."

At the *Committee of Privileges*, met to consider Sir J. Graham's Education Bill, the retiring and reserved Mr. Farmer made this strong remark: "The Church *we* are attached to is the Church of the Reformation, founded upon Holy Scripture. From any State Church which moves away from that foundation we are Dissenters. As Methodists we must be so. The Church puts us down as Dissenters. We must oppose this Bill cautiously, but we must *oppose* it."

Dr. Bunting disapproved of the Education question having been brought before the Bristol Quarterly Meeting.

Mr. J. Wood, of Bristol: "I hope we shall accept no favour from the Government which is not conceded to *all* denominational schools."

Dr. Bunting: "That is a Socialist, an Owenite system. I have spent eight hours in reading the Bill, and am more and more dissatisfied with it. It does give what we contended for at the last movement on Education: reading the Scriptures in the Authorised Version, and giving Christian instruction therefrom. No Churchman has a right to teach my children Churchism; but there are so many clauses in the Bill to which we objected that I am inclined, on the whole, to reject it. The Constitution of the Board is perfectly unbearable. If that is not altered, we must oppose the Bill with all our heart and soul. The poor rate maintenance is a new point in legislation. I object to compulsory payment and to penalties. The dismissal of the children is very objectionable. It may be by one Trustee, and he a cleric. Then, why a cleric in the Chair *as such*? The appointment by magistrates is very objectionable. Why should not the ratepayers have the choice? Should any man be allowed to come with authority between the parents and their child? Is it right to punish a man with penalties because he is an infidel? I raise up my sturdy objection to the Bill. *No doubt we are Dissenters. We are not Churchmen. I for one cannot be a Churchman*, at least a Church minister; I cannot say that everything in the book of Common Prayer is agreeable to the word of God; still less sign it and say that I believe it. It is time that we had done with this bushfighting. In a *sense* we are *Dissenters*; yet there is a sense in which we are not, but only *Nonconformists*. I cannot defend the foolish sayings of some on this point. Tell the Government what you approve of, and what you object to. I think the Bill has been concocted in too much haste. It had better lie over till next session. But Hume and his party are committed to the principle. *The backbone of this country is its Church*. There is no lack of money among the Roman Catholics or the Church of England. I would suggest that the country members of this Committee be called together." The meeting of the town and country members was held six days later.

Dr. Bunting: "It is one. Our business is to see whether any modification can be made in the Bill, or if it should be opposed altogether." He restated his objection to the Bill, and added: "I think it is unmendable. There are two propositions: (1) To oppose it in a sort of knockdown way, and thus join the Dissenters. This I think not the best. (2) To try to get the objectionable parts altered. I fear there is no prospect of doing this, but we shall be in a better state by having made the attempt. I will tell the Government what we approve: That the Scriptures should be taught in the Authorised Version, and that Christian training is an essential principle in national education. But each section of the Church should instruct its own children, and those of as many others as choose to place their children under its instruction. If this Bill be effectually resisted, we must be prepared to do more than we have done, and not keep our money in our pockets; we must live less self-indulgently. Tell them our objection to the intolerant, unreasonable claim of the Church at any time, particularly at present; I would make a protest against Puseyism. I wished for an opportunity of doing it last Conference, but will do it now. I would deal kindly with the Evangelical party in the

Church. The ratepayers should inspect the appropriation. The Board is perfectly unbearable. The ground of exemption should be altered. No reason should be required for sending a child where the parents please. A parent has a right to be capricious towards man, but not towards God. The dismissal clause and Sunday school clauses must be given up. There are many other grounds of objection, but I would select the strongest. We must not talk gossip, but I believe that the history of the Bill is this: The Radicals are at the bottom of it. The measure the Whigs brought in being thrown out, the Government consulted the High Church party. They ought to have consulted the Wesleyans and Dissenters. The subject is full of difficulty."

Mr. G. Osborn: "I think the Committee of Privy Council objectionable. It may be what we like, but it might be otherwise. I know how the power will be exercised in Manchester, Leeds, Rochdale, etc. No modification can be made consistent with truth and liberty. The Puseyite party have their books and prints in readiness. Their machinery is all ready."

At the adjourned meeting Dr. Bunting read a series of resolutions which he had drawn up at the request of the committee. These formed a most perspicuous, forcible, and statesmanlike document, showing *what* we approve and what we disapprove of in the Bill, and *why*. These, and a vote of thanks to Dr. Bunting for drawing them up, were carried by *acclamation*.

At the May Meeting of the Committee of Privileges, Dr. Alder gave an account of an interview with Lord John Russell, from which "it was apparent that Lord John understood our position *as not Churchmen*, nor yet Dissenters."

Dr. Bunting: "I think the Government has done us grave harm by making some important alterations in the Bill, which I believe they honestly intended to amend it; for instance, the constitution of the Board."

Mr. Fowler and many others totally dissented from this view.

At the *Book Committee*.—A complaint by Dr. Campbell was read to the Committee. The advertising Committee had declined to stitch in a prospectus of a new periodical of which he was the *Editor* (the *Witness*), on the ground that "it advocated the separation of Church and State."

J. Fowler: "I think this reason insufficient after the strong siding with the Scotch Free Church by the Conference, the Connexion generally, and our leading men—Dr. Bunting in particular—and by the *Magazine*."

Dr. Bunting: "I could show the contrary, but think our time might be better employed. I move that the Committee now becomes the London Ministers' Meeting." This generalship succeeded, and Dr. Campbell's complaint fell flat.

Dr Bunting: "It is a base, grovelling, unworthy thing that young men stay lurking at home when we want men for the foreign work. I could not speak thus if I had not offered myself to go. Mr. Hoole has been trying to procure men and cannot succeed. This should be known. Our whole system is wrong; a man going out and thinking of returning home does not go in a right spirit. The Bishop of Calcutta said: 'Where should a Bishop die but in his diocese?' I believe that God was never a party to a covenant for limited service. The going is of God, but the stipulating to return is of man. Perhaps I have done wrong in expressing myself so freely."

A letter was read from a minister in Cornwall complaining of a tract on Teetotalism, written by another minister, which was alleged to have done great harm in Cornwall. Another letter was read to the directly opposite effect. Letters from the author were read complaining of the loss inflicted on him by the Book Steward's first granting and then withdrawing permission to print his name on the title-page.

Mr. Reece: "I think the pamphlet violent and inflammatory; the Book Steward's name should not be upon its title-page."

The Senior Editor: "I concur with Mr. Reece; but the author has been grievously and painfully provoked."

Mr. Scott: "I think the author did wrong in meddling with another man's Circuit."

Dr. Bunting, who had just entered: "I am not prepared to say that a man has no right to reply to persons who attack him because they live in another Circuit."

Mr. Naylor: "The writer of the tract had been greatly exasperated, and but for some personalities I should have approved of the tract."

Mr. Prest: "I approve of the argument of the tract, but condemn its expression. I am sorry that while the matter is good the manner is so evil."

Mr. Naylor and Mr. McLean said they "adopted Dr. Bunting's views on the subject."

Dr. Bunting: "My views are neither those of Mr. Naylor nor those of Mr. McLean. I was at first disposed neither to bless the tract nor to curse it; but am now decidedly of opinion that it has done more harm than good. A sub-committee should be appointed to draw up a soothing letter to the brother, which he may publish if he please."

Mr. Mason: "It would be much better to pay the brother the cost of a new title-page than have any more publishing on the case."

Dr. Bunting opposed this, so it did not pass.

The Senior Editor brought a complaint against a brother for having drawn him into an unseemly newspaper contest for having given a faithful review of one of his publications.

Dr. Bunting: "Brother — has no right to force the Editor into a literary duel for having done his duty. If the brother had any unfairness to complain of, he should have brought the matter *here*."

The brother defended himself by saying that before issuing the pamphlet

he had submitted it to six brethren, three of whom were present. Dr. Bunting then made some scathing stricture upon the pamphlet.

Dr. B. : " You applied to the doctor for the advice you wished for."

Mr. W. M. Bunting : " I think the brethren who sanctioned the publication of the pamphlet ought to come forward and avow it with manliness and Christianity, and put themselves into the way of receiving the animadversions of my father, who is allowed to say what would not be received from any other person."

The brother acknowledged he had done wrong in appealing to the public against the Editor in the conscientious discharge of his duty. Dr. Bunting was satisfied, and so the matter dropped.

Mr. Fowler inquired whether the statement in the *Leeds Mercury* was true that an advertisement from the Anti-Corn Law Association had been refused insertion by the Advertising Committee? After some fencing it came out that it had.

J. Fowler : " I think that very indiscreet."

Mr. T. Jackson then gave way to angry remarks on the expression of opinion on such matters.

A work was offered to the Book Room by Henry Williams on " The Church Character of Methodism."

Dr. Bunting : " I am not sure the time has come to go from our original position. I would not have a work which might set us against each other. I think it might be more courteous to read it before declining it. He might be advised to publish on his own account. It would be more soothing. The readers thought this the best course, as, though not controversial, it contained points which lead to controversy among ourselves."

The combination in one gigantic personality of multitudinous faculty, facility, and aptitude is no fault or condemnation of the individual himself. Who could blame Briareus for his being born with a hundred hands? Yet if Briareus blunders, the disastrous consequences may be fifty-fold. But this is not the whole ; and this, perhaps, is not the worst. Concentration of office, power, and influence in a particular place has its dangers and disadvantages as well as concentration in a particular person. London naturally, almost necessarily, attracts to itself and absorbs within itself the greatest number of the greatest men. If the London apprentices became at one time a factor in the State, to be considered and taken into practical account, no wonder that on Wesley's death the London Preachers should assert themselves within the commonwealth of Methodism by assuming the initiative in Methodist matters, movements, and measures, and thus form themselves unwittingly into a sort of irresponsible Directory, or constitute themselves into a sort of Committee of

Public Safety for the rest of the Connexion. This, in any case, was what took place, sometimes to the annoyance, if even to the clear advantage, of their *confrères* in the country. As other departments in addition to the Book Room—such as the Mission House and the Theological Institution—fixed in London their headquarters, the city on the banks of the royal-towered Thames came more and more to be regarded as the seat of government for the entire Connexion. By some it was proposed that a portion of the Centenary Fund should be devoted to the building and furnishing of a Presidential residence in the metropolis. This project was not carried, but when the spacious, stately edifice in Central London was purchased and fitted up for departmental purposes, this feeling was very much strengthened. As able and firm-footed men, with grave yet placid faces—readily recognised as Wesleyan ministers—wound their way to the Wesleyan *Centenary Hall*, they felt that they were going the way to the Downing Street of Methodism. The advantages were obvious and manifold, but, at the same time, several ministers, such as Mr. Fowler, Mr. Galland, and Dr. Beaumont, were awake to the advantages to a community of distributed administration, and the evils of a bureaucracy or oligarchic government.

Hence the resolution of the Birmingham District Meeting in 1843, moved and seconded by strong Conservatives like Edward Walker and James Topham, and unanimously carried, resisting the—as it seemed to them—officious and obtrusive directions and instructions issued from the Centenary Hall on matters not confided by the Conference to any one of the departments or all of them together.

The locating of the Chapel Committee in Manchester has proved a most auspicious and successful experiment in this direction. It has not only diffused authority and influence, it has also utilised a large amount of practical sagacity which must otherwise have run to waste.

Dr. Bunting, again, was endowed by nature with a mighty voice, of which he had a perfect mastery. He was no reciter, but his elocution was consummate. His bare reading of the Scriptures was expository and homiletical to a higher degree than most men's sermons or expoundings. The intelligence, sensibility, and force with which he gave out our hymns struck me the first time I ever heard him more than even his preaching and appeals.

In short, "boon Nature" seemed to have dealt with him as Abraham with Isaac when he left to him the substance of his varied wealth, and to the rest of his sons "gave *gifts* and sent them away," or like the Semitic millionaire of our own time, who said, "I shall leave my property to my eldest son ; I shall only give the rest a hundred thousand pounds apiece." Jabez Bunting was, first of all, a born *speaker*; he had the gift of moving his fellow men by words, and tones, and looks to a wonderful extent. He was next a born *financier*; and learnt "accounts" almost by intuition. He was then a most expert *administrator*. It was most interesting to watch him on the departmental or the legislative rope-walk, deftly paying out the threads or fingering the tow which was to be joined into the cable of a three-decker of the line. He was a born *debater*; he could be at will the "Rupert or the Cromwell" of debate. He could charge uphill like a regiment of Cavaliers, or bear down on his opponents like a troop of strong-horsed Ironsides. As a swordsman at close quarters he never met his match ; he could pass or parry, *feint* or *lunge*, with infallible dexterity. It was fine to note the way in which he would escape one of Mr. Fowler's sharp and sudden questions, retreating under cover of a witticism, or avoiding by a quick retort. He dealt with Dr. Beaumont's headlong impetus with quiet ease. He knew well how to *get within his guard*. I witnessed a fine instance of this in the London District Meeting. When the lists of mission deputations for that District was read over by the senior Secretary himself, Beaumont arose with the printed copy of the list in his hand, and, running over it peeringly, remarked, as if with wonderment, "I don't see the names of any one of our Missionary Secretaries on this list. They either are as well informed about the missions as the rest of us, or they ought to be. How is it, then, that not one of their four names is to be found upon this list."

Dr. Bunting: "We haven't time. We have other work to attend to."

Dr. Beaumont: "Then I haven't time. I've other work to attend to."

Dr. Bunting: "Then why don't you attend to it? We can't go off to Petty Nook to reopen a chapel, or to Cats' Pond to preach Sunday School sermons."

At this Dr. Beaumont collapsed, although his strong point was left untouched.

Another element of strength was his prodigious *staying power*. It was apparently exhaustless. In this I never knew his equal. This fact especially impressed me at the Conference of 1848,

when he had passed his threescore years and ten. As minister of the Conference chapel, and the youngest minister on the list, it was my special privilege to attend to the fathers on the platform. I noticed that throughout the Conference he never left the platform for a moment during any of its discussions. He could still sit out the youngest and the strongest. In truth, nothing of importance could be discussed without his presence being felt. He had a passion for business, and seemed hungry for affairs. This gave him an immense advantage. He had every detail at his fingers' ends.

The three sources of greatness had their influence. But the order of the two latter sources was reversed. He was "born great," and had "greatness thrust upon" him, and "achieved greatness." He was under no temptation to ambition, in the etymological, the conventional, or vulgar sense of that misused, mistaken word. He never sought office; it was office that sought him. It came a-begging to his door, and could never have its fill of him. He neither made his opportunity nor did opportunity make him. His amazing preaching powers first brought him into notice, not by its brilliance but by its soul-wakening and soul-winning force. As old George Morley said, "Every sentence *cut*." He learnt the art of preaching by hearing in his youth in Oldham Street chapel, Manchester, the most successful preachers of his time, such as Benson, Clarke, and Bradburn. He had all the internal force and fittings, and the external aptitudes, facilities, and accessories of an effective Preacher.

Yet he was not a *pulpit orator*. People who came to hear him under that impression were sharply disillusioned. They found no pyrotechnic splendours and no dazzling coruscations. They found themselves *under arrest*, in the grip of a giant.

When at the close of his probation his preaching power had marked him out for London, his distinguished colleagues soon discovered in him other gifts of inestimable value to the Church. His financial faculty was soon put in most testing requisition. An unsystematic system of give and take had brought the Funds into confusion. This he set right.

From all these causes an unvoted masterhood was allowed to Dr. Bunting, and an immunity from the restrictions to which his brethren were required to be amenable.

As might have been expected, the very strongly featured policy which he thought the best for Methodism did not quite commend itself to some of the most thoughtful and most earnest



of his seniors, his coevals, and his juniors in the ministry. Moreover, his influence and practical predominance in all departments of administration, from the Stationing Committee upwards, produced in some two or three, doubtless, a personal jealousy, and in many more a sincere, unselfish solicitude for the interests of the Pastoral Brotherhood, and for the Connexion as a whole. For his will was to the full as potent and commanding as his intellect. Hence there sprang up two parties in the Conference. Two of course, if one at all; for it takes two sides to make a party as well as to make a quarrel. And the fault is not always or of necessity with the opposition, or the party out of power.

That Dr. Bunting's policy did not work without friction, creakage, or combustion is only too apparent. But one does not yet expect the best padded, best appointed Pullman train to be a musical box or literal guarantee for assurance against accident to life or limb. The practical question comes to this: Was the system so well worked as to provide all fair, reasonable, and humanly attainable safeguards against calamity and crash? Let us see.

"By this time (1823) there was a secret feeling amongst a very few that Bunting must not always have his own way." ("Life of Dr. Bunting," p. 565.) "Some of the brethren think that Mr. Bunting has too much power." (Conference of 1823, *ibid*, p. 567.) Thus, it seems, the first audible "murmuring" arose (Acts vi.) amongst the Methodist brethren against what the instinct of self-preservation has taught all liberty-loving communities and commonwealths to guard—an overweening, untrusted, irresponsible authority, gathering like an incrustation round some one naturally powerful, strong-willed individual, to the curtailment and the imminent infringement of the rights of the fraternity in general.

Is it safe or seemly for any member of the Conference, except the President for the time being, to assume prerogatives which he himself does not concede to any other member of the Body, or to enforce upon others obligations and restrictions to which he will not himself submit? No one, so far as I know, for a moment questioned the opinion of the letter-writer quoted by Mr. T. B. Bunting in the "Life" that if it were necessary to entrust such power to any man, no one could compare with Dr. Bunting in fitness for that high position. And few, if any, would contest the converse statement, that the objectors to

Dr. Bunting would not have filled the post so well as he did. But that is not the point. I accept the putting and the phraseology of Dr. Smith: "It would have been better for Methodism and for Dr. Bunting had he never occupied a position so slippery and dizzy; that he would have been 'more than human' to preserve his equipoise; and that his brethren would have been 'more than human' not to think and feel it to be as exceptionable as it was exceptional." I accept also Dr. Smith's expression: "The Conference ought not to have been placed in the position" in which it sometimes found itself by the position taken up by its most honoured member.

I have often wondered that the Preachers had suppressed the instinct so effectively developed in their sons at Woodhouse Grove. We would not permit the strongest, the cleverest, the most popular, the most hero-worshipped of the hundred boys who constituted that little lively commonwealth—not even the head of the school or the corporeal cock of the school, or both rolled into one—to challenge for himself a domination or to take on the air of masterhood. I think, next to "Robinson Crusoe" and "All the Voyages Round the World," the most popular book amongst us was "Anecdotes of Wesley." One of Wesley's sayings did effective service against assumptive individualism. When a very eminent minister declared that if so-and-so was done he should leave the Conference, Mr. Wesley quietly observed, "Reach him his hat." And in our all-including games, like push-battle, there was one sufficing settlement of all such menaces: "And Mr. Wesley said, '*Reach him his hat.*'"

And is not that the proper answer to all such Achillean threatenings of withdrawal from the council or the camp? In the cause of the great Wesleyan Methodist commander, no doubt the Conference at such times felt much as the poet felt as to the object of his admiration (with the substitution of a single word):

"There's so much *talent*, wit, and spleen about thee,  
There is no doing with thee—or without thee."

One serious abatement of the incalculable service rendered to the Conference by its ablest member was the checking and curtailing of that freedom of discussion and inquiry which is the breath of life to a deliberative assembly. This want of

sufficient ventilation produced an insalubrious effect. But for the winnowing fans of such men as Fowler, Galland, and Beaumont, the great threshing-floor of the Connexion would have become *stuffy*, almost stifling, except during the three readings of the stations.

For not everyone who "had a burden" could screw his courage up to face the strongest athlete of the age. This was a feat requiring no small nerve and hardihood and readiness. To be knocked down like a ninepin was not a pleasant thing to look forward to or to look back upon. An amusing illustration of this fact occurs rather early in the life of no less stout and sturdy a debater than Samuel Romilly Hall. He writes to his friend Nightingale, after his first speech in Conference, as if he had been "shooting the Niagara" or crossing the Atlantic in a punt. *Apropos* of Romilly Hall at the Leeds Conference of 1856, the last that was ever dignified by Dr. Bunting's presence, Mr. Hall came to me at the close of an anxious morning session, and "set" me on my way to dinner. He said to me most gravely, "Gregory, I have a very black, tough crow to pluck with you." "What's that?" "Why, just that you do not take your proper part in the Conference crow-plucking. It *vexes* me to see such men as you and Wiseman sitting there as silent as a Sphinx whilst questions are discussed and interests decided on which require all the thought and reading that can be brought to bear upon them." The next Conference, therefore, I took up my parable, my point being the inadequacy of the obituary of Dr. Bunting, which had just been read.

At a later Conference first Mr. Vasey and then Dr. Rigg came to me, and laid it strongly on my conscience to speak more frequently in Conference, in consideration of the fact that the extreme fewness of the speakers was detrimental to some important interests of the Connexion. In fact, at this time it was an express principle with some leading men that the discussions in Conference should be left to a very few, for the most part to the platform. Thus the domestic adage was extended to the Conference: "Little people should be seen and not heard."

The battle of perfect freedom of speech in Conference was fought by William Arthur, S. R. Hall, T. Vasey, J. H. Rigg, and the proverbially trepid companion whom they had pressed into the service.

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At a later Conference first Mr. Tappan and then Dr. Rugg came to me, and said so strongly in my conscience to spend more frequently in Conference in consideration of the fact that the extreme fervour of the speakers was detrimental to some important interests of the Convention. In fact at the time it was an express principle with some leading men that the discussions in Conference should be left to a very low, for the most part to the popular, level. Thus the principal stage was extended to the Conference, while the popular would be sent and not heard.

The battle of proper location of speech in Conference was fought by William Adams, S. F. Hall, T. Tappan, J. H. Rigg, and the proverbially tragic comparison which they last pressed into the service.

The most awkward affair of all, perhaps, was to call the attention of the Conference to a tendency on the part of authorities at the Mission House and Richmond to stretch their disciplinary action beyond their rights and powers. It fell to my lot to fulfil this undelightful task. In the year of Dr. Bunting's death (1858) a young man answered an advertisement from the Swindon Circuit for a hired local Preacher preparatory to the application for an additional minister the next year. He laboured there with marked acceptance and effectiveness, as I can testify, having visited the Circuit repeatedly at that time. The memory of his ministrations is still cherished there after the lapse of nine-and-thirty years. At the next District Meeting, in the regular order of business, on the asking of the question "whether any minister residing in the District is under engagement to our Missionary Society," the Superintendent of the Circuit asked the advice of the brethren on the case of a probationer for the ministry employed in his Circuit, who since the Conference had been dismissed from the Richmond branch of the Institution for having requested the committee to reconsider his engagement to the foreign work on the ground of a very important change in his own personal relations. After due deliberation I was instructed, as the District Secretary, to make a *Nota Bene* of the case in the District Minute, and refer it to the judgment of the Conference. This was done accordingly.

At the Conference, when the report of the Richmond branch of the Institution was presented, I inquired what had become of the student. I was answered that he had been sent home by the authorities on account of his unwillingness to go abroad according to his original designation. I asked for the Minute for his case, and as the Minute Book was not forthcoming, moved that it be sent for. This was carried. On the arrival of the book it was found that while the sentence of expulsion was definitive and definite, the reason for it was vague and unexplicit. I asked whether the young man refused to *fulfil* his engagement to go abroad. No answer was returned by the Governor or Secretary; but the Assistant Tutor, Mr. Hellier, stated that, on the contrary, he had expressly avowed his readiness to redeem his pledge, if the committee thought the changed conditions would justify them in releasing him from that pledge. But on being pressed to say that he could go "with a glad heart," he hesitated. He was therefore dismissed.

Against this assumption by a local committee of the power of excision from the ministry, I appealed to the justice and the dignity of Conference. I argued, "Here is a young man who has passed with credit all the constitutional Courts and safeguards against the admission to our ministry of unfit men: the Quarterly Meeting, the District Meeting, the July Committee, the Conference itself. But on asking a local committee whether they do not think an important change in the conditions of his case might not render inexpedient his being stationed in the foreign field, he is informed that he has forfeited not only his studentship but also his position as an accepted candidate for the Wesleyan Methodist ministry, and is forthwith sent about his former business. This same local committee feels itself under no obligation to report this exercise of the power of life and death. The poor youth is heard of no more. The wave went over him, and he is gone."

Of course, this exorbitant assumption of judicial authority only needed the turning on it of the bull's-eye of Conference inquiry to secure its condemnation.

The President, Dr. Waddy, in his own massive style, showed the gravity of this encroachment on the rights of Quarterly Meeting, District Meeting, and of Conference. The cashiered probationer was at once put upon the President's List of Reserve, and after thirty-eight years of faithful, efficient labour in such Circuits as Cheltenham, Bristol, London (Brixton), and Exeter, he still survives.

As soon as this case was settled, it was seen that another case of the kind had taken place during the year, and when this, too, was disposed of, the President asked with grim significance, "Are there any more?"

The case to which I called attention closely resembled that of Thomas Collins, some twenty years before, and the difference in the mode of treatment showed the steady influx of the encroaching tide of departmental authority on the guaranteed rights of individuals and the Conference. A law was made without delay, requiring that all such exercises of discipline should be reported to and decided by the Conference itself.

It fell to me also to call attention to the similar dismissal of a young missionary by one of the Missionary Secretaries. His Superintendent had complained to the Missionary Secretaries of his unmanageability and refractoriness. Thereupon one of those authorities wrote to the young minister, informing

him that he was no longer a Wesleyan Methodist missionary, and that if he wished his homeward journey to be paid for he must embark by the first steamer. A copy of this letter came into my hands. Of course, I felt it to be a call for inquiry at the Conference. It required no forensic gift to show that this was a direct violation of the laws and regulations of the Wesleyan Methodist Missionary Society, drawn up by Dr. Bunting and Mr. Watson on the formation of the Society, and published year by year in the Report of that Society. All that was required was the Secretary's letter and the first of those laws. The Conference could do no other than restore the man to his post, and inform the Secretary that he had gone beyond his powers. The fact that the man was coltish and restive, and beyond his Superintendent's strength and skill to manage could not invest a Secretary with authority to pronounce his doom, and "let another take his office."

These were not the only cases of the kind which it fell to me to bring before the brethren, but they suffice to show the habitual tendencies of these departments to overstep the bounds of their lawful jurisdiction.

In the Leeds case we have seen a powerful element of disaffection in the Connexion generally, through liberties then taken with the law and Constitution, and the insertion in the Minutes for two successive years of the novel principle that the action of the Conference was the decisive exposition of the meaning and intent of both law and Constitution.

But a new interpretation of the Constitution demands a new convention of the parties to it. No Constitution makes provision for its own infringement by one of the parties to its terms without the consent of the others. We must therefore say : Dr. Bunting was too much disposed, by natural temperament, to trench upon the Constitution and the law if they blocked the way to a movement or a measure upon which his heart was set.

Hence those regrettable peculiarities which Dr. Smith describes as "infirmities of manner." But, unhappily, Dr. Bunting's frailties, like his powers, were very energetic ; so much so as to infringe too sharply on the sensibilities of others. Amongst these must be included his occasional indulgence in an extravagance of language which he would be the last to tolerate in any other man. Instances of this occur in Mr. Fowler's Journal of Debates. Many of the most notable of these we have thought it fair to leave uncopied, on the ground that, had



reporting been the custom, he might have been more guarded in expression. But one has heard him in committee and in Conference indulge in phraseology such as Lessey justly designates as "*cutting*," such as would have been allowed to no one else by any President who had due respect to himself or to his office. Such words were sure to leave in sensitive and high-strung natures a festering sting, to say nothing of the seeming smirch upon a minister's repute.

Another mannerism which had a tendency to lessen loyalty to his Connexional administration was his way of claiming for himself, and the departments over which he was the chief, a degree of irresponsibility and of immunity from investigation or animadversion which he would in no wise suffer in any other minister. He rightly said : "If I have the responsibility, I must also have the power." But he was apt to leave unread the obverse of the medal : *If I claim the power, I must take along with it the responsibility as well.* But this he could by no means stomach.

And there were worthy members of committees and Conference who could not quite see the fairness of permitting the great Questioner to be the great Unquestioned. So early as 1826 he had resisted and resented the most proper and, indeed, necessary question : By what authority a certain public contravention of an act of Conference had taken place ; and entrenched himself in the position, that if the matter were any further pressed, he should take it as a general vote of want of confidence, and should give up all his offices. Whereupon the questioning had been transformed into a most true and submissive hope that he would do nothing of the kind.

Correspondingly in 1828, when in the Chair of Conference for the second time, he positively refused to submit to the self-same inquiry, in which the retiring President had fully acquiesced, unless a charge against him was submitted in writing. (Smith's "Methodism," vol. iii., p. 131.)

At a later Conference, when, most naturally and rightly, he was asked for an explanation of various things which he had "laid against" certain honoured members of the Conference of which he made no show of proof, he took the same lofty, independent ground, declaring : "*I will not be catechised*" ; and demanded yet again an explicitly worded, *formulated charge*.

Not only was Mr. William Bunting's statement true : "My father is allowed to say what no one else may say," but the great

man was allowed to be silent in circumstances and under conditions when many would be required to speak. He was, so far as I know, the only member of the Conference who took the liberty, or was left to take the liberty, of disregarding the explicit ruling of the President. This was signally permitted in the case of Dr. Bunting's demand to be informed by Mr. Galland, on the question of *Character*, whether or not he was the author of a certain incendiary letter in the *Leeds Mercury* which he then held in his hand. Mr. Galland asked to be allowed to take the opinion of the Conference whether it merited such an incriminating epithet; and the President pronounced this to be a fair and reasonable demand which ought to be complied with. Dr. Bunting persistently refused either to withdraw the offensive adjective or to hand over the paper containing the incriminated letter.

Of the great men nearest to himself in ministerial standing who followed not with him in his "policy," the most redoubtable are Valentine Ward, but by two years his junior, and Joseph Taylor, the second President of that name, who came out in 1805.

Dr. Bunting was, moreover, with State politics an avowed, an eager, and an aggressive party man—a pronounced and polemic Tory. Of this he made no secret, in the Conference or elsewhere. Now the Pastoral Brotherhood of Methodism was far from being homogeneous in this respect. The great Preachers into whose hands John Wesley had devolved the management of Methodism held, on all such matters, very diverse views. Bradburn, Clarke, and Thomas Taylor, for example, were decided Whigs. Not one of them was mean enough or weak enough, as has been asserted in a Methodist newspaper, to air his politics either in his preaching or his prayers; though they discussed them freely in their social hours. Hence some of the brethren did not greatly like Dr. Bunting's obtrusion of his own political partialities from the platform of the Conference, nor their exhibition on the hustings of a metropolitan election.

It is not probable that Mr. Fowler brought with him into the ministry any full-formed party principles. Bradford emerges into history as a Parliamentary stronghold, having been stormed by the Royalist forces in the course of the Civil War. But when I first wot anything of Bradford politics, some threescore and three years ago, the Tories had been in the ascendant for full twenty years, owing chiefly to the high character and great ability of the senior member, Mr. Hardy, father of Lord

Cranbrook. I am old enough and young enough to remember vividly first the sensation and then the temporary stagnation produced throughout the neighbourhood by the return of two Liberals, Lister and Bousfield. But Mr. Fowler's politics—on their Church side, in any case—were formed during the first two years of his probation under the influence of the sane and sober-minded Whiggism of the great Nonconformist ministers, Andrew Fuller and Thomas Toller. To this side of the house Mr. Fowler gradually gravitated.

Among the notables on this side were S. Jackson, Dr. Dixon, Dr. Beaumont, Thomas Galland, M.A., who "came out to travel" three years later. But during the next decade (1820-30) a strong accession was gradually made to this unorganised party in the persons of F. A. West, W. M. Bunting, S. Waddy, G. B. Macdonald, George Osborn (though always a Tory), and George Steward. Mr. West was Mr. Osborn's Superintendent.

But, by degrees, the seniors in the ministry either passed away, by reason of death, or sank into silence from exhaustion or from conscious inequality to the contest. When Clarke, T. Stanley, Isaac, Ward, and Galland went up higher, and J. Stanley and Atherton almost wholly held their peace, Mr. Fowler came to be regarded as the leading representative of the principle of free speech and fair play both in Conference and Connexional Committees. All these worthies I have gazed on with a reverence bordering on awe. With the one exception of Dr. Clarke, I have *heard* them all. With the exception of Clarke, Moore, Watson, and Ward, I have enjoyed the inestimable privilege of personal intercourse with them. They were amongst the noblest men whom our mother Methodism ever brought forth, brought up, and brought home.

It is plain from Dr. Smith's "History of Methodism" and from the "Life of Dr. Bunting," and is admitted both by friends and foes, that by the space of forty years Dr. Bunting occupied a perfectly unique position and predominant authority and influence in the Methodist Connexion, such as no one but the Founder himself has ever been allowed to wield. Throughout that period he was, in effect, the Premier, who never went out of office whosoever might do so, having never been appointed. It is necessary now to ascertain: (1) What this power really amounted to. (2) *How* it was *attained*. (3) *Why* it was by any one *objected* to. (1) What Dr. Bunting's power really amounted to. According to both Dr. Smith and Mr. T. P. Bunting, it

amounted to much more than the being *primus inter pares*: first among his peers. During the greater part of the time it amounted to a veritable Patriarchate or Protectorate. Of his preponderance in the discussions and over the decisions of the Conference in session nothing gives so trustworthy a conception as Mr. Fowler's Journal. This enables every reader to judge for himself. Government by speaking has had many wonderful examples, from Pericles to Pitt and Peel, to Gladstone and Disraeli, but few such marvellous examples as that of Dr. Bunting.

Dr. Bunting's influence over the Preachers through his known preponderance in the Stationing Committee is well touched on in Mr. Stanley's manly and fraternal letter. Everyone who knew Dr. Bunting must indignantly repel the idea of his being capable of intentionally or even consciously influencing votes in Conference through his recognised and inevitable potency in the Stationing Department as in every other. But it must be remembered that a very large proportion of the brethren had a deep distrust of their own competence to judge, or, indeed, the safety of their intermeddling with, Connexional affairs, as matters too high for them. And the practical effect depended not on Dr. Bunting's aim but on the impression which prevailed on the minds of ministers themselves.

There were, on the one side, some *sixty* Circuits of sufficient weight to share amongst themselves some 200 ministers of sufficient reputation to secure the most desiderated men, and on the other to be fairly sure of a high-class Circuit; but this left 400 Circuits and at least 1,000 ministers to be mutually adjusted. Now, with more or less of reason, there was a prevalent idea that in the matter of appointments it was of more or less importance to stand well with Dr. Bunting and his staff.

This fact was admirably hit and hinted in the Conference by Mr. Galland in one of his audacious witticisms. A poor brother had been pleading hard for a better Circuit than the one he was put down to in the second draft of stations, and Mr. Marsden with his inimitable quaver tried to quiet him by saying, "*Providence will take care of you, brother*"; on which the learned Yorkshireman remarked: "Yes; but how nice it must feel to be so near the ear of Providence as some of you are up there." That a man's supposed side in the inner politics of Methodism was not always regarded as inadmissible amongst the data for determining his appointment by the Stationing Committee, is undeniable.

We have seen that in the critical "Leeds case" Dr. Bunting was the ruling spirit. (See Smith's "Methodism," vol. iii., p. 130.) "Doubtless it was he who guided the deliberations and decisions of the Special District Meetings. The gist of the charge was that he and a few others influenced by him managed the affairs of the Connexion, and that those who opposed him in Conference were sent by his instigation to inferior Circuits. The first part of the charge could not be denied." ("Life of Dr. Bunting," p. 600.)

This deliberate record by Dr. Bunting's filial biographer ought surely to be taken as decisive of the fact that the *actual* government of Methodism at this period was an *autocracy*, strengthened by an *oligarchy*. That "he and a few others influenced by him" managed the affairs of the Connexion is undeniable. Then let no one attempt to deny it, much less to denounce as factious anyone who says the same.

This is, indeed, the impression produced by his biography on outsiders, who derive all their knowledge of our greatest man from this exquisitely written monograph, which is a classic specimen of gentlemanly English. Thus the article "Jabez Bunting" in Herzog's "Encyclopædia," whose one authority is this tasteful, truthful Memoir, affirms: "*His word was law.*" This is an exaggerated notion, but, happily, the other sentence in the summing-up is absolutely impregnable: "He used his influences for no personal ends, and withal kept his heart pure and humble." He was, in fact, our *Cincinnatus* and our Washington.

Dr. Bunting's influence and authority were very greatly strengthened by the wise though small concessions, and the real though restricted reforms which he proposed and, of course, carried at the Conference of 1835, after the Warrenite disturbances. For the next nine years he "flourished like a palm tree, and sent forth his roots like Lebanon." During this period occurred his third and fourth Presidency, the latter of which marked the culmination of his power. But, as the admirable sketch in "Wesley and his Successors" tells us: "From 1813 to the date of his death (1858) the chief parts of Dr. Bunting's personal history have also been leading facts in the history of Methodism and its institutions."

Dr. Smith must be again quoted:

"One preacher of remarkable powers, when comparatively young, made his début in Conference by supporting the application of the Liverpool Trustees for leave to erect an organ, and secured the object. He

continued to distinguish himself so that, *in respect of matters with which he had no individual connection*, he was frequently referred to as *the ruling spirit of Methodist government.*" (Vol. iii., p. 228.) "According to the theory of Methodism, as of the Christian Church in its Scriptural character, *all ministers are equal.* True, indeed, the former, like the latter, will admit of a *primus inter pares*, but the question arises: Was not the position now attained by this eminent minister *something more than* that of *first among his brethren*? It is utterly absurd to suppose that the position which Mr. Bunting occupied was secured by any grasping ambition, or through servile adulation or submission on the part of his brethren. Neither of these causes could have produced this effect. His elevation unquestionably resulted from the employment—in absolute and universal devotion to the well-being of Methodism—of a most comprehensive and forcible intellect coupled with great tenacity of purpose, remarkable tact, and a chaste and effective eloquence, consecrated in an eminent degree to the service of the church, and fully recognised by the great majority of his ministerial brethren. But though the position and influence of this eminent minister arose out of the special endowments with which he was favoured, the distinction which it created, and the amount of influence and power with which it invested him, were on this account no less positive or real; and Mr. Bunting must have been much more than human if this position did not expose him to peculiar temptations. His brethren must have been similarly raised above the frailties of our common nature if they, in these circumstances, felt no tendency to envying and evil surmising. *We feel bound to recognise these facts as they existed*, the more especially as we regard the vast influence which Jabez Bunting exerted on the Methodist Connexion as the grand characteristic of modern Methodism." ("History of Methodism.")

This admirable deliverance of Dr. Smith's weighty, judicious, and discriminating intellect in no wise overrates the greatness of, on the whole, the greatest man whom Methodism has yet *produced*. In truth, I have not yet met with any realistic presentation of that gigantic personality which could give to the public and posterity the full proportions of that mighty man. I was thankful to be told by his last surviving child and others that what I have already published has done much to rectify this unintentional injustice. The painter, the photographer, and the engraver have been more successful than the most affectionate, appreciative biographer and sketcher.

And Dr. Smith is entirely right in describing as preposterous the imputation of ambition against this noble man. The associating of ambition with the name of Jabez Bunting, taking that word in its etymological, its conventional, or vulgar sense, can be nothing but ridiculous to one who saw so much of him as I did. Jabez Bunting was above ambition in any sinister, ignoble sense. He had no more need to be ambitious than Chimborazo or the Hindu Kush. "Ambition should be

made of sterner stuff." And it should be made of softer and more supple stuff.

"Unskilful he to fawn or seek for power  
By doctrines fashioned to the varying hour."

*It was power that sought for him.* It was office that came, cap in hand, and knocked, and knocked persistently at the modest mansion, triennially "cleaned up" or "cleaned down," for the new Preacher and his family. In the fine sense in which the word is used in the Revised Version, he was ambitious enough in all good conscience. "Be ambitious to be quiet, and to do your own business." "We are ambitious to be well-pleasing unto Him." "Being ambitious so to preach the Gospel," etc. No doubt Dr. Bunting was high-minded in the Aristotelian sense: The high-minded man is he who, being "*really worthy of great things, holds himself worthy of them.*" But the great philosopher demonstrates that there is a *true* high-mindedness and a false one. Of ambition, in the original meaning of the word, the *going about* canvassing for a place of *honour*, Dr. Bunting was entirely innocent. He was, in truth, under no temptation to it.

Dr. Smith's recorded judgment that a man must be far more than human if the accumulation of office and authority upon him did not expose him to very great and special temptations; and, on their side, his brethren must have been more than human if it did not awake in them "envy and evil surmising," involves a serious condemnation of its unwarranted and hazardous excess. It is surely as unfair as it is unsafe to place mortal man, however great, who is still admitted to be "but a man," in a position of such dizzy, dangerous eminence. Nor should his brethren, on their own part, have exposed themselves to a temptation putting to excessive strain the resisting capability of human nature. Indeed, although the great Methodist historian, a warm personal friend of Dr. Bunting, strongly blames "the *spirit*" in which Dr. Warren objected to this smothering with offices any single member of the Brotherhood, he at the same time frankly gives his own clear judgment that this was a serious mistake on the part of Dr. Bunting's friends.

And this brings our second head. The saintly, simple-minded heroine, Queen Esther, would not form a judgment on a matter until she had made quite sure: (1) What it was, and (2) Why it was. We have learnt from the most unchallengeable witnesses what a vast, undefinable supremacy Dr.

Bunting came to exercise in the Connexion. We have also seen how this came about. Jabez Bunting owed his position in our Church, first of all, to a Divine designation graven by the finger of God upon the man himself. He bore Heaven's imprimatur on his frontispiece. "Jabez was honoured above his brethren" because he was, both by gifts and services, "more honourable than his brethren." (I. Chronicles, v. 9, 10, New Version.) And Jabez Bunting's prayer was that of his namesake in the olden time: "Oh, that Thou would'st bless me indeed, and enlarge my border, and that Thy hand may be with me." And God brought that which he had asked. For Jabez Bunting was a "man of prayer." He was wise enough to "covet earnestly the best of gifts," and as earnestly to cultivate them when bestowed. His most rich endowments were the gift of utterance and "helps" and governments. Hence, in rising to the top he simply found his level. These great qualities were recognised not only in the Conference but wherever they might find their element, most notably in the counsels of the Evangelical Alliance, as I have elsewhere shown. No member of that gathering in Freemasons' Hall had the least difficulty in understanding how he rose to such an eminence in his own denomination. The impression was just as strong on the great Scotchmen who were founders of the Free Church, at the time of his visit to Edinburgh in 1846-47. His surpassing genius for organisation and administration was most frankly and most warmly recognised by those greatest reconstructors of our modern times.

I know no more striking instance of the identity of human nature and affairs throughout the ages than the portraiture of Jabez Bunting given in the Book of Job in the person of an Arab sheik: "My glory was fresh in me, and my bow was renewed in my hands. Unto me men gave ear and waited, and kept silence at my counsel. After my words, they spake not again; and my speech dropped upon them. And they waited for me as for the rain, and they opened their mouths wide as for the latter rain. . . . The light of my countenance they cast not down. I chose out their way, and sat chief; and dwelt as a king in the army, as one that comforteth the mourners." This Mr. Fowler often quoted with reference to Dr. Bunting.

Moreover, Dr. Bunting was a mighty theologian; and this fact, throughout his course, most naturally and most rightly gave him a strong additional lien over the Wesleyan Methodist



mind. For our theologians and theological leaders were not yet so "advanced" as to depreciate theology, or to give it the vague and misty definition which has since been supplied to Sunday schools. At the close of his thirteenth ministerial year (1806), "the Conference, desiring some clear and forcible exposition of justification by faith, requested Jabez Bunting to preach a sermon on the subject. This discourse he delivered at Leeds, before the Conference of 1812" (Smith, vol. ii., p. 433). Jabez Bunting never could have wielded the unique authority which he held for forty years in the Wesleyan Methodist Connexion if he had not been throughout his course a thorough Wesleyan Methodist himself. The Liverpool Minutes, drawn up by him in 1820, have, as Mr. Grindrod says, "exerted a paramount influence in forming the principles, habits, and characters of our ministers, and essentially contributed to the preservation of the primitive spirit and discipline of Wesleyan Methodism." (Compendium Preface.) May they never lose that influence!

Dr. Smith exclaims: "Who shall estimate the amount of power and influence wielded by Dr. Bunting? If for thirty years Wesleyan legislation bore the impress of his mind, if for a generation he framed the great majority of the Acts of Conference—what could he not do?" ("Methodism," vol. iii., p. 455.) Dr. Smith is also absolutely right in adding: "The state of things which the history of this period exhibits could not have been brought about by the pride, vanity, or ambition of anyone. It was Dr. Bunting's pre-eminent ability, his vast administrative talent, which commanded his measures to general acceptance."

As they say in Dr. Bunting's own ancestral county: "That *shall* be true." For the strong substratum of this great man's eminence was solid, substantive, and serviceable—so much so that the threat of throwing up his office made everyone aghast. Dr. Smith, however, asks:—

"Was there not an obvious reason why the friends of Dr. Bunting should have exercised great self-denial, and an equal reason why his friends and admirers should be agreed, while he possessed this great influence, for him to have a moderate amount of official responsibility and power? When the Theological Institution was successfully launched, why was it necessary for him to be its President? Does anyone maintain that no other man could command the same degree of confidence and respect? We fully assent. But while we admit there were cogent reasons for the appointment, we gravely doubt and seriously question the wisdom of insisting on it. The greater Dr. Bunting's just and necessary influence, the greater his acquired and consolidated personal authority, the less desirable was it there should be anything like a concentration of official

authority in his hands. We believe we have enunciated a sound principle, and if it had been acted on in the case of Dr. Bunting, it would have produced the happiest results to himself and the Connexion." ("History of Methodism," vol. iii., p. 456.)

These are wise, brave words. Unquestionably, the taking upon themselves, by a committee appointed for another purpose, the delicate, important task, which was not intrusted to them, of nominating officers to the new establishment, and the heaping upon one of their own number the two most important of those offices, whilst yet retaining another office which required the very best attention of the very ablest man, was an injudicious and unseemly act.

The inevitable effect upon himself of so often thrusting Dr. Bunting into the most prominent position in a dispute with which he had no direct concern whatever, any more than any other Methodist minister, was most painful and injurious. It put him into a false, invidious position. As Mr. T. P. Bunting says: "At this period of his history he was put into the pillory of almost universal discussion." ("Life," p. 601.) Certainly. And by whom and by what was he made the subject of almost universal discussion? "The disturbance amongst the Methodists was fair game for the secular Press; the quasi-Liberal portion of which, of course," etc. (*Ibid.*) Dr. Bunting's proclaimed, aggressive partisanship on the one side was sure to cause him to be regarded as "fair game" by the other side, whether "quasi"-Liberals or genuine.

Another mischievous result of these blunders was the abstracting the attention of both ministers and people to questions of polity and policy, law and Constitution. Another still more mischievous, but happily more local and sporadic, was the adoption by a certain style of Superintendents, in their own sphere, of the "constitutional emergency" principle of government—in Mr. Watson's phrase, "the intemperate exercise of authority"; and Dr. Bunting's, "the riding on the neck of authority" and "the Bashaw" style of Superintendency. Of this I was myself a most pained and indignant witness. I was spending a Sunday in Heanor (Dr. Gervase Smith's birthplace). In the afternoon the patriarch of the Society called in at mine host's on his way from Class. A most patriarchal personage he was, and the then head of a family well known in the Derbyshire coal trade. It had been the Quarterly Visitation of his Class, and the Superintendent had met it. It came out that at the close of

the meeting the Superintendent had asked him whether he was a member of a trades union. On answering that he was, and being asked to give it up, he replied that he could not promise to do that, as he knew no law against it, human or Divine, and the union to which he belonged was legalised by an Act of Parliament. The Conference did not forbid although it strongly disapproved of such associations. The minister, putting the Class book into his own pocket, informed the patriarch that he was no longer Leader of a Class. Thus summarily was a venerable Leader degraded from his office and estranged from the Society. As the Superintendent was also Chairman of the District, the old man did not think it of the slightest use to appeal to him as Chairman against his own act as Superintendent. The effect of such a procedure on the Society in general was extremely painful. Happily, this sort of thing was not the ordinary course. All this time the minister himself was, socially, kind-hearted and considerate to a remarkable degree.

The next great blunder was the forcing back into the regular ministry of Mr. Everett, after he had clearly shown that his treasure and his heart were in the book trade. During the earliest years of his ministry he was a sound Methodist Preacher, but at the end of the fourth year he took so little interest in Conference matters that he preferred remaining another year on trial to attendance at the Conference. This he himself attributes to "timidity and indifference." This "indifference" continued to the close of his Connexional career, though his "timidity" was of very short duration. His explanation to Dr. Beaumont of the inveterate indifference to the highest council of his Church was that his talent did not lie in the direction of debate. Conference would have a very thin attendance if that were thought sufficient reason for abstention from it.

How anyone who had heard Mr. Everett preach and talk could wish him back into the work is to me a mystery. The only way in which I can account for it was that the bookshop in the middle of Manchester had become a sort of lounge and rendezvous for the interchange of Methodist gossip, and that Mr. Everett's Sunday services, throughout a large and populous area, were not found to be conducive to the peaceful and pleasant working of Lancashire Methodism. Of this Dr. Newton, Chairman of the Manchester District, who started the question, was well aware; but Manchester was relieved at the expense of the

Connexion. Mr. Everett was presented with a grievance which he was sure to turn most skilfully against the Conference.

The loyalty of the Methodist brotherhood as a whole to the powers that be was beauteous to behold. I may illustrate this by a pleasantry I passed on Thomas Vasey when he began to be a Conference man. I said: "How glad I am to see you so desirous of securing your interest in your brethren's prayers." "What do you mean?" said he. I answered: "You are evidently most anxious to secure a share in the benediction incessantly invoked on those who '*take a more active part in the business of the Conference.*'" "Meek, simple followers of the Lamb," they were but too thankful to see the work done well to grudge due praise to those who "performed the doing of it." The appreciation of Dr. Bunting's talents and his services by men like Joseph Fowler, Thomas Galland, and Francis A. West was unbounded. As for his genius for administration and discussion, it is enough to note the frequency with which Mr. Fowler deplores the absence from the Conference of its one great master-mind.

I never heard but two persons in my life who ever spoke a syllable in disparagement of the intellectual power of Dr. Bunting, and the deduction in both cases was the same—the absence of "originality."

A devoted adherent of Dr. Bunting's policy, who was also the greatest sermon-hunter I ever knew, pronounced him "one of the most commonplace preachers it ever was his fate to hear." My contention was: "You might as well complain of Wellington for want of originality as Jabez Bunting." It is not incredible that some portionless itinerants, aware of Dr. Bunting's influence in stationing as in everything besides, might have thought it best to solicit that influence on behalf of themselves and their belongings; and, as Sir Walter Scott was taught by dearly bought experience, "Enough of ill-nature to keep your good nature from being abused is no bad ingredient in their dispositions who have favours to bestow."

But all the more resistlessly the question will recur. How, then, did it come to pass that, with all these charming and commanding qualities in the real and effective manager of Methodism by the space of forty years, the closing years of his administration were signalised by the loss of 100,000 members out of a total of 358,277? This question, again, resolves itself practically into another. How did it come about that

the *Fly Sheets*, with all their repulsive rancour and offensive personal antipathy, could occasion a catastrophe on this stupendous scale? And this question also bifurcates: (1) How much of it may be explained by what occurred before those evil-omened missives were sent forth? (2) And how much by what was subsequently said and done?

The preparatory causes of the mischief-working potency of those productions were, of course, deep-seated, complex, and intricate. Dr. Rigg has indicated most of them. The intrusion of secular politics into Church affairs, the development of self-inflation in the Body through the world-surprising produce of the Centenary celebration, the consequent lowering of spiritual power and influence in many, not in most, of the ministers and people, and the attempt to remedy this by a "spurious revivalism," meaning by that a professional, mechanical, and artificial revivalism.

All these were, doubtless, highly favourable conditions for the propagation of disturbance and the facilitating of disruption. But it must in all fairness be remembered that the political element was not confined to either side. The one side was as chargeable as the other with the violation of political neutrality. A one-sided neutrality is as unfair, absurd, and, in fact, impossible and pretenceful, as one-sided reciprocity. If Mr. Galland had written to a provincial newspaper in vindication of a Methodist's supporting the Government measure for finding some way of meeting current Church expenses less irritating and objectionable than Church Rates levied on unwilling Nonconformists, Dr. Bunting had appeared upon the hustings in the Metropolis itself, and had written to the *Standard* newspaper in favour of a Tory candidate, and had successfully written to the newspaper against the candidature of Lord John Russell for the representation of Bedford. In short, more obtrusive violations of political neutrality had been committed on the side of that which declared itself to be the majority than on the other.

William Griffith, indeed, was the only minister who could fairly be described as a political agitator, since he brought his politics into the pulpit, and even into his prayers. I heard his first sermon in his last Circuit (Ripley). I had a little while before heard Feargus O'Connor, the Chartist chieftain, harangue an outdoor mob, and his street speech was not nearly so inflammatory as Mr. Griffith's Sunday

morning prayer in the town chapel of the Circuit of which he was the Superintendent. No doubt he did what he dared to propagate his politics through the medium of his ministrations. But, on the whole, the Tory party in the Conference was quite as aggressive and as provocative of reprisal as the Whigs and Radicals.

I do not think that either envy on the one side or adulation on the other played a very leading part in aggravating the disruptive paroxysm. The author of the *Fly Sheets* was the only Methodist minister who reminded one of the picture :

"Pale envy withering at another's joy,  
Hating the excellence he cannot reach."

No ; the homage and the deference paid to Dr. Bunting by his brethren was as universal as deserved. The Conference and the Connexion could not but be proud of Jabez Bunting. The predictive benediction upon Judah rested richly on his brow : "Thou art him whom thy brethren shall praise." But with the more insistence the question still rebounds : How, then, could it come about that the *régime* of one so great and good should close in a catastrophe?

The answer is already given. It was owing to one cardinal defect. His own designation of it was "impetuosity." But the flaw in the diamond is more aptly indicated by the fine-pointed pen of his filial biographer : he was congenitally "*masterful*." Alas ! for our unhumble human nature at its *very best* ; how easily does the imperial become imperious, the masterly assume the masterful !

It is impossible to estimate the policy of Dr. Bunting without bringing into view his personality. For his personality was the father of his policy. And was ever son more like his father than Dr. Bunting's policy was, as again they say in his ancestral county, "the very moral (model) of his personality" ? Jabez Bunting was a born orator, a born financier, a born debater, a born pleader, and, "over and above that," he was a born autocrat. To avail ourselves of his own epigrammatic style, he was constitutionally unconstitutional.

He would himself reply, putting his strong, soft fingers on my arm, and lifting his cerulean orbs to mine (as I have seen him do to Mr. Arthur) : "Yes, you've just hit it. That was just what I was, and what I meant to be ; I was unconstitutional enough

in an extraordinary emergency ; but I was constitutionally unconstitutional."

The accent and the pose of Dr. Bunting was that of authority, and his elocution was in nothing so effective as in terms and tones of reprobation and of scorn. The first time I ever heard him, at the opening of Woodhouse Grove chapel in 1833, this, next to his giving out the hymns, left upon my mind the most vivid, permanent impression. There was, of course, a fearful crush to gain admission. During the announcement of the first hymn, a noisy charge was made by disappointed pilgrims from a distance on the guardians at the top of the stairs. This uncouth uproar was too much for Dr. Bunting's sense of reverence, so he turned in the direction whence it came and dealt out a terrible rebuke. I can, surely, never lose the feeling roused within me by his rendering of the next verse of the hymn, on the same pitch :—

"Fools never raise their thoughts so high ;  
Like *brutes* they live, like *brutes* they die."

His text was : "But seek ye first the Kingdom of God and His righteousness," etc., and he made a warm appeal against the passionate pursuit of wealth. And I cannot forget the way he drew himself up as he proclaimed : "But, you say, Ye sons of Levi take too much upon yourselves." No one I ever heard, except the late Bishop Wordsworth, could read the 15th chapter of the 1st of Corinthians with such befitting dignity as Dr. Bunting. But the solemn pathos of the passage was a little marred by the jerk with which the latter hurried out the words, "Thou fool."

He evidently found it hard to deny himself the luxury of smart and irritative satire. I believe that no other of his unattractive mannerisms did so much to lessen and to loosen the respect and loyalty with which he was regarded. Nothing in the whole *Fly Sheets* was so effective as the famous testimonial paragraph. The genial institution of valedictory testimonial, which does so much to mitigate the hardships of itinerancy, was only coming into vogue some sixty years ago. With the exception of the impecunious Sammy Bradburn, Methodist ministers had found them to be "Like angels' visits, few and far between." But by this time there had grown up among the brethren a sort of pious opinion that this particular phase of philanthropy was not to be discouraged rudely. Dr. Bunting took against it stoutly, and talked against it with no little

tartness. He was wont to speak of the testimonialised brethren as being "lacquered"; as if by this process the itinerary luminary, like Milton's day-star :

"Tricked his beams, and with new golden dye  
Flames in the forehead of the morning sky."

It implied that something made of tin or brass had received a thin artificial coating of the most precious metal. This was not felt to be very complimentary to the worthy gentlemen whose popularity brought them, once in three years, gold and silver, with the regularity of the navy of Tarshish.

But in process of time some wealthy Wesleyan Methodists did themselves the honour to raise a very handsome and well-earned testimonial to the virtues and the services of the greatest man in the Connexion. This, of course, he recognised as a most timely, Providential supply of the need of a now ageing minister of Christ, who for more than forty years had "spent and been spent" in the service of the Church. And not the most cynical of his observers could have found the slightest fault with this, but for the untoward fact that he had borne so hard upon his brethren who had been favoured in like manner, though on a smaller scale.

Another of our hero's strong infirmities of manner was the native outcome of abnormal strength of will. What the poet said of Alexander was just as true of Dr. Bunting: "He *wills not* that another man should cross *his will*." Hence his imperfect tolerance of opposition to any plan on which his heart was set.

Again, he was the most impetuous polemarch that ever led a charge. In no other man did I ever witness the *certaminis gaudia* so passionately pursued. "The rapture of the strife" seemed to be, indeed, "to him the breath of life." It was grand though terrible to see him "*let himself go*" in the *élan* of the onset.

But, at the same time, it must be owned that I never saw so hard a hitter who was so thinskinning himself. His own blows cracked like a whip and cut like a whip.

His personality and his polity were all of a piece, and were therefore all the more imposing and impressive, like the rock and castle of Mont Orgueil, in the Isle of Jersey, the fort being built out of, as well as on, the very substance of the cliff itself. And no man ever stamped the impress of his individuality upon the institutions which he fashioned more deeply or more sharply than did Dr. Bunting. Yet no full-length portrait of this strong



Church chieftain has ever yet been drawn. This could not possibly be done by anyone who did not know him *nearly*, and had not contemplated him *con amore* in all the varied spheres in which his lustrous orb revolved. The most elaborate "taking" of him is that by Mr. Everett ; but it is in reality a mere torso, and gives a most inadequate conception of what manner of man he was. The best and truest is the obituary in the Minutes of the Conference of 1858. I made an *essay towards* an outline of his character in the *Wesleyan Methodist Magazine* for 1887, but that, too, was sketchy and unfinished.

A just medallion of the man has yet to be struck off.

In one essential qualification for this task—affectionate admiration and an all but filial reverence—I claim to have no rival. If a prize epic, or *Jabez*, were proposed, old as I am I should be tempted to compete.

Jabez Bunting, though by birth and bringing up a Manchester man, was a veritable son of the soil. By heredity and affinity he was of the progeny of the Peak of Derbyshire, and of the remnant of its giants. He had in him the grit of the limestone and the "strength of the hills."

In my young days I knew well the Derbyshire Buntings, who all hailed from Moneyash. They were a sweet-spirited, gentle-natured tribe, steady-going, serviceable, quiet in the land, yet of bright intelligence and ready wit. They were artisans of the better class, who "took in the Preachers," and served the cause in many other ways. The Redferns were a strong-willed race, and were for the most part Friends or Church folks.

The importance of placing the strongest man procurable at the head of an institution for the training of young men for the Wesleyan Methodist ministry was so obvious and so urgent that very few, who thought it safe to start the Institution at all, doubted the necessity of placing it under the government of our very strongest man. All experience shows that unless assemblages of high-spirited young men are under men endowed with the highest gubernatorial gifts, the establishment is far more likely to become "a joy of wild asses" than "a pasture of flocks."

And, in combination with his unrivalled faculty for command and leadership, Dr. Bunting showed some very winning, charming, and to me even captivating qualities. Among these was his affectionate and respectful bearing towards youths of likelihood and promise. His bearing towards Mr. Arthur,

for instance, even when in opposition, was, with one exception, touching to behold.

And the great man's enjoyment of the offhanded smartness and the thrice comfortable coolness of young Thomas Vasey, at his first appearance at the Book Committee and his challenging the right of the Meeting to impose on any member of it any regulations to which he had been no party, was almost as amusing as was the young man's arrest of business by haggling about a sixpence fine for late attendance.

Nothing could have been more fatherly or more assuring than his manner at the private examination of the candidates for ordination in the year of his fourth Presidency, 1844. The promptitude and heartiness with which he recognised the gifts and worth of probationers like George Osborn, George Steward, F. J. Jobson, and John Morris was as generous as it was discerning.

In fact, a catholicity of appreciation of any real intellectual gift was as strongly characteristic of Dr. Bunting himself as of his sons William and Percival.

This accounts for the marked attention which he paid to Mr. Everett, and for his tenderness to Mr. Bromley's awkward eccentricities. And is not this the explanation of his otherwise unaccountable obtuseness to the disqualifications of some of the able men whom he chose out for departmental office? For his influence was just as potent in this point as in others. He had no temptation to Napoleon's jealousy of a general who might share the glory with himself, as of Moreau, of Kleber, and of Hoche. Of him it could never have been said: "He bears, like the Turk, no brother near the throne." And in friendship he was not an unimpeachable Arminian. Unconditional perseverance seemed to be his doctrine in this matter. "Once in grace always in grace," seemed to be the rule with Dr. Bunting.

In physique Dr. Bunting was "a proper man," tall, well moulded, well developed, and presenting an eye-arresting figure on the platform of a great Church gathering. In this the Centenary picture does him great injustice, giving but a side view of a man whose full face and erect, unbending form would alone convey a good idea of the great counsellor, debater, administrator, leader, and commander. His successive portraits in "Wesley and his Successors" represent him truly as he was at the dates of his four Presidencies. In that for 1820 we see the intensely earnest Preacher, with shapely, balanced

brow, direct and searching gaze, the compressed lips, and the resolute determination of the reformer and revivalist. A marked change must have come upon the outer man between the dates of his first Presidency and his second (1820, 1828), judging from the portraits of the periods. At the later date he stands before us in all the strong maturity of middle manhood. His forelocks have been mowed off by the gentle scythe of time, leaving bare his large development of benevolence, humour, veneration, and comparison. The vivid eagerness and sternness of the juvenile reformer have sobered down perceptibly.

The portrait of Dr. Bunting as he was in his fourth Presidency, given in "Wesley and his Successors," is most felicitously faithful. There he sits, the picture of an ideal President of the Wesleyan Methodist Conference. The public and posterity can seek no more from the portrait painter's art. It does one good to look at him once more as one used to see him on "the platform," in the Chair of a public meeting, or as the listener in the social gatherings of his later years. There you have him in his mature and well-developed, and as yet unfading, manhood, with his smooth, broad, bare brow, a Methodist Preacher unmistakably, still Jabez Bunting, Preacher of the Gospel.

Jabez Bunting's great greatness has never yet received its due of recognition and of reverence. He has no place in such a work as *Leaders of the Church Universal*, wherein much smaller men are being honoured with an ample record. In the folios of Schaff's "Herzog," a fragment of a column is literally all that is accorded to the greatest Wesleyan since Wesley, in that necropolis of Church celebrities, Herzog's "Encyclopædia." Yet in a sterling Christian Plutarch Jabez Bunting would stand out a massive and majestic figure. I have elsewhere shown the points of correspondence between him and Pitt, but the resemblance between Dr. Bunting and the great Greek statesman Pericles is still more striking. Each of them began his public life as an ardent advocate of popular reform, yet each of them full soon became a stout and staunch Conservative. Yet no candid student of men, career, and character can for a moment doubt that each of them was actuated from the very first by the purest personal conviction. Their eloquence was also wonderfully alike in simplicity and force, in weight and impact. Their elocution, too, seems to have been marvellously similar in modulation and distinctness. They

were alike also in dignity of bearing and in their resolute, commanding air. They were akin, too, in disinterestedness and sublime unselfishness, and in strenuous and sedulous devotion to the public service. They were alike, also, in the choice of able coadjutors. As the first triumph of the Grecian statesman was the restricting greatly the authority of the Areopagus, so that of the great Wesleyan Methodist was the limiting of the power of the Legal Conference; and the great Jabez, like his Grecian analogue, full soon became Conservative, and therefore anti-popular. As Pericles was a most eager advocate of one all-including Hellenic race, so Dr. Bunting was the presiding genius of the Evangelical Alliance.

But such was the greatness of the Methodist Leader that it requires the two great ancient heroes, Pericles and his Roman parallel in Plutarch, Fabius Maximus, to make one Jabez Bunting. The policy of Jabez Bunting in its later stages was distinctly Fabian. Dr. Bunting was four times President, and Fabius but five times held the Consulship. The description Mommsen gives of Fabius would, *mutatis mutandis*, serve as well for Dr. Bunting: "Zealous in his reverence for the good old times, for the political (ecclesiastical) omnipotence of the senate (Conference), and for the command of the burgomasters (selected laymen); one who looked, next to *sacrifice and prayer*, to a *methodical* prosecution of defensive and aggressive warfare as the main of the salvation of the commonwealth." And the parallel extends just one step further; it was only when the dictatorship was grasped by other and less skilful and experienced hands that the *crash* came on.

And the record of this fact is but bare justice to the memory of our very greatest man. To anyone who reads the "Life of Dr. Bunting" with sufficient care, it is apparent that his control of the Connexion closed with the Conference of 1848, whilst he was in his seventieth year. "In the growing strife Dr. Bunting was scarcely seen or heard. . . . His strength was broken." To one of his children he writes: "I have great weakness and loss of voice." "In the most painful and often greatly excited proceedings which led to the adoption of this measure (the expulsions of 1849) Dr. Bunting took no prominent part. He seldom spoke except to points of order" (pp. 703-7).

This testimony is true. But fancy a Conference at which

Dr. Bunting was present and yet took no prominent part in its most critical proceedings! Assuredly this was the first Conference for forty years of which that statement could be made. Does it not demonstrate that the predominance of Dr. Bunting had *determined*, and that the forty years of his practical Premiership must be counted from 1808 to 1848? Of the critical Conference of 1850 it is recorded: "Dr. Bunting can scarcely be said to have exercised all his usual influence in guiding his brethren. . . . He was in bad health and depressed by much bodily weakness, as well as much harassed by private cares and anxieties. He was therefore indisposed to consider any modification of the Church system of Methodism. . . . Afterwards he came to acknowledge the wisdom of these measures."

To the same effect was his conspicuous absence in the spring of 1849 from the Meetings of the Book Committee and the London ministers, during which the *Papers on Wesleyan Matters* were discussed—the only instances I can recall in which he was not the very foremost in discussion. In the like spirit was his grave rebuke in the Conference of 1849 of the discreditable want of the calmness and decorum befitting a solemn and most anxious council of our Church when the ministerial life or death of three well-known ministers was trembling in the balance; and in the same direction was his expressed wish that the sentence on Mr. Everett himself might leave unbolted the door for his return. In full accord with this was the whole tone and spirit of his converse when I met him in Southampton shortly after the Conference of 1851, when he came down with a band of missionaries ready to embark.

In his advice to the consultative meeting assembled in London in 1852, he warned the brethren against "ultraism—love of change for change's or for theory's sake."

Little did I think when, in 1848, I took the whole service in the Conference chapel, Hull, except the sermon—one of his most celebrated homilies—little did I think that this would be his last sermon in a Conference chapel in connection with a Conference, and that it marked the ending of a Premiership of forty years.

## CHAPTER XI.

### DIRECT CAUSES OF THE DISRUPTION OF 1849.

"The disruption of 1849 was a gigantic blunder on both sides."—SIR HENRY FOWLER.

"In our unnatural war none, I hope, is so weak and wilful as to deny many good men, though misled, on both sides. Behold how heaven is hard-grating one diamond with another. As for all those who uncharitably deny any good in that party which they dislike, such show themselves diamonds indeed in their *hardness* and cruel censures, but none in any commendable quality."—THOMAS FULLER, *Good Thoughts in Bad Times*.

"Do you confess so much? Give me your hand."

"Ay, and my heart too!"

—SHAKESPEARE.

In inquiring into the causes of the disruption of 1849, it will be best to take them chronologically. In this way their historical concatenation will be the most apparent.

The first of these, then, was, as we have seen, the growing up within the Conference itself of a vague, indefinite, unappointed, irresponsible, irremovable Government or Cabinet, which, never having been called in, could not be *voted out*—not even if out-voted. This consisted of the un-nominated Premiership of one surpassing personality and of a circle or a cincture of some very able men, who with him constituted the perennial administration whoever might come into office or go out of it. Thus the real, active, working policy of Methodism had become in its main feature an impalpable bureaucracy.

This fact is rendered undeniable not only by the Conference discussions recorded in Mr. Fowler's Journals, but also by the affirmations and admissions of such competent authorities as Dr. Smith's "History of Methodism" and Mr. T. P. Bunting's "Life of Dr. Bunting." The question is no longer, "Was that so?" but "How did the system work?"

The answer to this question may readily be gathered

from the Conference discussions. All that seems now necessary is just to indicate the proximate occasions of the mischief. The first of these, as we have seen, was the forcing back into the itinerancy of Mr. Everett, who had evidently lost all heart for it, and the presenting him with a grievance and a grudge which he well knew how to capitalise and make the most of.

He had to give up a prospering business. He implicitly forewarned the Conference of the sequel by telling them that though fourteen years of shop life, with preaching when and where he pleased, had banished his bronchitis, yet the resumption of Circuit work now that he was on the downward slope of life would be a risk of which the Conference must take the responsibility. As a shrewd brother showed the Conference, this practically meant the extreme likelihood of Mr. Everett's speedy return to the supernumerary list, with no business to fall back upon. Mr. Everett was the one man allowed to choose his own Circuit, and his selection of Newcastle - upon - Tyne did not indicate much terror of bronchitis.

The companion blunder to this was the readmitting Mr. Griffith into the ministry after he had demonstrated the unsuitability of such a step by a series of most warning escapades and insubordinations, and despite the solemn and sagacious demur of men like Richard Reece and Dr. Beaumont. It was and is to me a mystery how anyone who had heard the two future dividers of the Body preach and talk could fail to see in each a perpetual peril to the peace and unity of the Connexion, and that in proportion to their popularity.

The next false step was the irritating course which was resorted to in dealing with the "Takings." Assuredly the course suggested by Mr. Fowler and by Dr. Beaumont would have been much wiser and more dignified than the walking into the trap prepared by Everett. In order to baffle and divert the scent, he had, in his Preface to his third edition, thrown out certain names of ministers whom some wiseacre here or there might have hazarded as the imaginable authors. Thereupon the London District Meeting, with Dr. Bunting in the Chair, despatched to the five different District Meetings, then in session, to which these brethren belonged, laying it upon their loyalty to Methodism

to put these brethren through the sieve in such a way as either to convict or clear them. All this, of course, greatly furthered Mr. Everett's purpose.

Another serious mistake was the beginning to send forth from the Centenary Hall, in addition to the required schedules for statistics, gratuitous instructions as to the way in which Superintendents and Chairmen of Districts, and District Meetings themselves, should go about their business. Can it be much wondered at that Superintendents and Chairmen of experience and of competence such as ex-President Taylor, and well-manned District Meetings like Birmingham and Nottingham and Derby, should decline to recognise these "missives," as they were called? And was it not an aggravation of the blunder to complain of such men to the Conference as guilty of "discourtesy" in refusing to acknowledge an authority under which they had not been placed by Conference?

Then came the second supernumeraryship of Mr. Everett, which in his case meant by no means a retirement from "the active work," but from the regular work of a Circuit minister. As his published journal proves, it involved far greater exertion of the voice and exposure to the weather than any ordinary Circuit would entail, and almost incessant travelling and speaking in crowded chapels, and often out of doors—for he was greatly in request for foundation-stone laying, and was still an exceptionally hale, stalwart, strong-voiced speaker. The coupling with him of Dr. Beaumont in the same condemnation removed all Superintendential scruples against utilising in their Circuits his money-raising power, since the notion was ridiculous of depriving the Connexion of Dr. Beaumont's services on such occasions. Mr. Everett thus became at once the Connexional *Tatler* and *Rambler*. With one hand he sowed disaffection and distrust, and with the other gleaned materials for his *Fly Sheets*.

Then came the *Fly Sheets*, which proved the occasion of the terrible division, not by their own potency, but through the genius for blundering which was displayed in the measures taken to counteract their mischief. The time at which they came was most untimely. The tide had evidently turned in favour of free speech and of frank, fraternal criticism, without fear or favour, about all departmental things. Men who had been kept out of the Chair of Conference for a stretch of years (Stanley, Atherton, and Samuel Jackson), for no imaginable reason but for trying to put



some constitutional *brake* upon tendencies which they thought to be unhealthy, were now elected in succession.

Moreover, some younger men in Conference had begun to speak out their convictions freely. Of these the most notable was George Osborn. He set an admirable example of the principle which he announced a few years later : Speak freely in discussions, but when once a question is decided, do not agitate but acquiesce. Throughout life he was a model of submission to the judgment of the Conference ; but the allowing him to turn a Declaration into what he himself described as a "test," but which the Conference carefully described as a purely "permitted" document, proved to be a very grievous error. The "precedents" which he alleged were all, in reality, distinctly condemnatory of it, either in their character and their relation to the Conference, or in their practical effect. The Agreement amongst Wesley's Preachers was in no sense a test, nor even a declaration, but just what it called itself, simply an Agreement—not an *enactment*, to be enforced under pain of Connexional disability and discredit. The Declaration of 1797 expressly and most carefully repudiated its being a test. It was not initiated by or in the Conference, but was the spontaneous expression of some of the younger brethren of their perfect confidence in their senior brethren. The Declaration of 1834 was issued not by Conference but by the London Ministers' Meeting, and not unanimously, excepting after wringing pressure, as in the case of Mr. Stanley. The Brotherhood was kept for years upon the tenterhook before a sufficient number of signatures was gained to make it presentable in the Minutes. It proved to be just another demonstration of the worthlessness of a Declaration under penalty and pressure.

It must surely be admitted that to turn a declaration into a test is to make it worthless as a testimony. The wise man gives as a piquant exhibition of the human heart : "It is nought, it is nought, saith the buyer ; but when he has gone his way, then he boasteth." Thomas Fuller, in exposing the deceitfulness of sin, shows that before it is committed it is made to look like a shallow, narrow stream, to be crossed by stepping-stones with little risk, but after its commission it appears a flood too deep to wade and too strong to swim in.

The danger of such documents being misused both against the signers and the non-signers was too clearly shown in 1834 by the attempt, in Conference, to make it out as committing the signers to vote in one particular direction, and as disqualifying the non-

signers for nomination to the Hundred. Mr. Osborn's motive for reissuing a "permitted" declaration two years later, without consulting Conference on the matter, was doubtless high and pure, but it proved to be ill-advised and harmful, and disastrous in its consequences. It could not confer on any member of the Brotherhood the right to consign any of his brethren to a black list opposite the white list.

The next deplorable mistake was the publishing and, in spite of earnest protest, the selling at the Book Room, of anonymous attacks on eminent and worthy ministers. Was not this a fatuous abandonment of the high moral and religious vantage ground which had been so wisely and so strongly occupied, and posting their artillery on what they had themselves so justly and so zealously denounced as a forbidden tract to men of honour and of Christian principle? And the battery so falsely fixed was not turned against the enemy himself but against honest-hearted fellow-soldiers, who were held back by nature and by grace from resorting to reprisals. This was a stupendous blunder. It made the fortune of the *Fly Sheets*, which would otherwise have been annoying and exasperating enough, but comparatively futile and innocuous. The issuing of this organ of anonymous detraction of eminent and honoured ministers, with the publisher's name upon its title-page, and its exposure for sale at the Wesleyan Methodist Book Room and Conference Office, emboldened the author of the *Fly Sheets*, with his lay accomplices, to do what up to this point they had not dared to do. The stealthy private circulars, without even a printer's name, and sent by post to ministers alone, were now collected, advertised, sold openly as literature in the guise of a vindication from assault.

Mr. Osborn did himself great credit, and showed just self-respect, by publicly washing his hands, by a letter to the *Watchman*, of all connection or complicity with this slanderous miscellany, the *Papers*, etc.

The next grave blunder was the way of dealing with Dunn, Everett, and Griffith. I now agree, though I did not at the time, with my beloved and honoured Superintendent, Mr. Fowler, that the safe, the dignified, and the effective course would have been to treat them as all wise men treat anonymous, unpublished slander—with stern and silent scorn. But I can forgive myself and my fellow-signers in this matter for feeling and for acting otherwise. The attack on Dr. Bunting was especially detestable. I often quoted Shakespeare's noble couplet :

"An eagle, towering in his pride of place,  
Was by a mousing owl hawked at";

which I sometimes thus adapted :

"A lion, couching in his pride of power,  
Was by a mining mole clawed at and chafed."

But our present question is as to the way in which the mole was hunted. It seemed to me, and events too well confirmed the notion, that two most serious errors were committed. The first was the non-isolation of Mr. Everett, and the turning out of three ministers of, at any rate, diverse degrees of guilt at one fell stroke. The second was the non-avoidance of everything that could look like a stretch of power or a strain of law, or a party *coup*. Would it not have been immeasurably better to deal with the arch-conspirator alone?

No one I ever met with, or ever heard of, who had listened to James Everett's pulpit-talk and table-talk, and had become familiar with his style of writing, had the slightest doubt that, whoever might have knowingly or unknowingly aided or abetted him, the *Fly Sheets* were his productions. It seemed to me a very maladroit manœuvre to bundle up in the self-same condemnation two other ministers of whose connection with the business there might be—and there actually was—a very reasonable doubt. I myself did not believe that either Dunn or Griffith was capable of any such complicity. As it turned out, Dunn had nothing to do with them whatever; and, as he told the Conference when first the matter came before it, no one who really knew him could in the least suspect him of a trick so palpably repugnant to his nature and his habits. His perversities were of quite another kind.

As to William Griffith, I thought, with most folks, it was not like him to give himself deliberately to such tortuous and subterranean workings. He was a headlong, headstrong politician, but I thought him far too big and brave to be burrowing underground, and too impatient and impetuous to be driving galleries beneath the soil. But I learnt later, from indubitable evidence, that he had received and read the proof-sheets of those ill-omened documents.

It was a marvellous mistake to send forth into the field an armed triumvirate instead of a solitary and suspected individual; to twine a threefold cord instead of leaving one thin, tangled thread to bear the strain. James Everett, by his single self,

would have cut a sorry figure, either on the platform of Exeter Hall or on the well-glazed pages of the *Illustrated London News*, without the Titanic bulk of William Griffith on the one side, and the sturdy, white-haired, pink-faced Samuel Dunn upon the other. A moulting "sparrow on the housetops" of the holy city could scarce have been a more pitiable picture, or uttered a more cheerless chirp.

But William Griffith would have agitated all the more furiously! Yes, "like a wild bull in a net," and with a noose about each horn and hoof. Dr. Bunting's safe advice about refractory Leaders, in 1835, would have come in aptly here. "I would bear with him. If he be a really bad man, he will do something worse, and we shall get hold of him at last."

Be it well remembered that our present point is the effect of the expulsions on the Methodist mind and on the outside public. William Griffith might have been safely trusted to commit some dashing deed which would have brought him well within the grip of the law. But what of Samuel Dunn? Well, his case and its treatment by his brethren made a very strong appeal to public sympathy. Folks did not like the look of it. He was guiltless of the anonymous detractions resorted to by the *Papers on Wesleyan Matters*. His *Wesley Banner* was not a whit more intermeddling, nor a whit more partisan, than the *Watchman*, which received a vote of thanks from the Conference.

Again, I could not but think at the time, and I am as incapable of judging otherwise to-day, that the resort in these cases to the ugly-looking and extreme appliance of the "brotherly question," under pain of expulsion on a refusal to give a categorical and unconditional reply, was a very grave mistake. The principle which lies at the basis of the right of brotherly questioning, and the corresponding wrongness of a refusal to return a brotherly reply, is indeed essential to the coherence and reality of a brotherhood like that of the Wesleyan Methodist Pastorate. I should be sorry and alarmed to find myself able to understand how a man with the heart of a Methodist minister can persistently refuse a frank, fraternal answer to a frank, fraternal question. The Methodist minister who has some deliberate act or habit to conceal from his brethren has something to repent of and something to renounce. We especially must "walk in the light" to "have fellowship one with another." Anything like evasion is abhorrent to the genuine Methodist Pastor. But there were very serious awkward-

nesses in the application of the brotherly question to a case of Methodistic life or death.

The Conference had expressly and explicitly bound itself, on its first and third assembling after Wesley's death, not to make a high-handed, unrestricted use of the absolute power of expulsion of any of its members with which it found itself entrusted by the Deed of Declaration "for any cause which to the Conference may seem fit or necessary." The question arose at once and naturally : "*For any cause* ; but does that imply *in any way* ? Does it mean : Without either evidence or trial ?" These were brotherly questions which could not but crop up. And therefore, immediately after Mr. Wesley's death, certain regulations were adopted for the administration of justice, so as to furnish an apparently safe check upon all "clandestine or arbitrary expulsions." ("Polity of the Wesleyan Methodists," p. 292.) Again, 1793, it was enacted : "If any Preacher be accused of immorality, the Preacher accused and his accuser shall respectively choose two Preachers of their District, and the Chairman of the District with the four Preachers chosen as above shall try the accused Preacher, and they shall have authority, if he be found guilty," etc. (*ibid.*, 293).

This seemed to be, and was intended to be, a safeguard against the expulsion of any minister without a regular trial and an amount of evidence sufficient to convince at least three out of five brethren. But still the right of brotherly questioning, and the wrong of a refusal to answer, were regarded as in full force. This is plain from the action of both Kilham and the Conference, in the celebrated cause of 1796. The Conference assumed the utmost freedom of interrogation, and the suspect, Mr. Kilham, did not make the least demur to the exercise of that unquestioned right of questioning. He either answered there and then, or desired "time to consider this question," with a view to full, frank answering. The transparent stream of kindly sentiment was "winding at its own sweet will" hard by the rigidly embanked canal of legislative equity. On the part of the Conference, the demands of legality were most religiously respected ; but the brotherly question took precedence : "Do you acknowledge the pamphlet ?" Kilham—like a man and a brother : "I do." Mr. Mather : "Do you intend to support the paragraph on the first page ?" Kilham : "I desire time to consider."

Had, then, Messrs. Everett, Dunn, and Griffith any precedent for refusing to answer a question with regard to their action in

relation to Methodist matters? Unhappily they had. One minister, and one alone so far as I remember, had set the perilous example of persistently refusing to reply to a fair, a proper, and a necessary question put in Conference. He had done this repeatedly ; he had done so with the menace of resigning all his offices ; he had done so from the Chair of the Conference ; he had done so with impunity, with success. He had, when for the second time the occupant of the Presidential Chair, demanded a formulated verbal charge as the condition of paying the slightest attention to any questioning of his conduct in connection with a course of action which had already cost a thousand members. He had subsequently cast abroad from the platform a humiliating and discrediting aspersion on the motives and the acts of the honourable members of the Conference who felt bound to express dissent from one of his proposals, and when most rightly asked to define and prove his charge, had peremptorily answered : *I will not be catechised* ; and had repeated his demand for a definite and written accusation. He had, under the name of "badgering," resisted and resented questioning which alike the duty and the dignity of Conference required it to both put and press. After this "continuous" course, had he been expelled? Not so—for a second, third, and fourth time he was made President of the Conference.

All this made the resort to the brotherly question a rather awkward-looking move in a case which involved no less than Connexional life or death. The *Watchman*, in a very notable leading article, whilst suggesting to the Conference this rough and ready implement, had confessed that it was not incapable of perilous misuse. But it had not put its pen-point on the real pith of the matter. It had stopped short of showing that the brotherly question might become most trying and unbrotherly, in look if not in fact, unless applied all round. The releasing any one member of the Brotherhood from its brotherly embrace was to leave it optional to any brother to be held by it or not.

Now be it borne in mind that our present question is the wisdom or unwisdom of using this appliance in the particular and respective cases of Messrs. Everett, Dunn, and Griffith. And does not this question resolve itself into another : "Was it wise or unwise to give to such a man as Mr. Everett a plausible, presentable contention that the very expulsion of himself and the two others was a pat proof and a signal illustration of one of the chief charges put forth in the *Fly Sheets*?" Was it

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wise or unwise to disregard entirely the inevitable look of the proceeding to the British public and the British Press?

Are there not certain elementary, essential principles of "*fair play*," and *all-roundness*, and *equality* before the *law*, our Saxon sensitiveness to which is not to be despised? This principle is embodied in the petition in the sacramental prayer for the whole State of Christ's Church Militant: that "all who are put in authority may truly and *indifferently* administer justice for the punishment of wickedness." This is a matter in which it will not do to have one law for the platform and another for the pew in a holy fraternity of equals; one law for a departmental brother and another for a supernumerary. This necessity for a just and equal administration was expressly called attention to by a very fine-spirited brother, Robert Inglis: "If Everett be expelled, *even-handed* justice requires that everyone else should be expelled who has refused to answer questions put to him in Conference."

This awkwardness was evidently felt by many of the speakers.

This moved Mr. Bell to say: "I am in great difficulties; I hope the extreme penalty will not be inflicted. I warn my brethren against expelling a man on vague reports."

Mr. Macdonald: "I do not sympathise with Everett, but I think it would be better to suspend for twelve months." Even Mr. J. W. Thomas (Vates) thought "suspension would be better than expulsion, if safe."

Mr. Methley: "It will be dangerous to our Circuits to expel on this ground."

Mr. Bromley put the same point in his own way: "It is a marvellous thing to expel a man against whom no charge is laid. If Mr. Everett is expelled for the crime of contumacy in not answering a brotherly question, then all who are in the same category of crime must be placed in the same category of punishment. I propose that all who have taken this ground should be arraigned before we expel one."

Dr. Bunting: "I move that a clause be inserted that if at the end of twelve months Mr. Everett give satisfaction, his case be reconsidered."

Dr. Dixon: "I think expulsion for contumacy, without this clause, is beyond the rule of equity."

Mr. Haswell: "I think a person who is the author or abettor of the *Fly Sheets* should not be a member of the Conference; but I propose 'That Mr. Everett be reproved from the Chair, his name left off the Minutes, and that he be not allowed to preach out of his own Circuit.'"

Dr. Newton opposed this. Dr. Beaumont: "Are we not in danger of overstraining the Constitution? By a resolution of the London Book Committee slanderous publications have been sold at our Book Room. I support Mr. Haswell's proposition. To slanderous publications I am an inveterate, indomitable enemy. But in developing your mysterious resources to crush slander on one side, take care you do not foster it on another. I

have a duty to perform to Christ and eternal justice, and I should have lost my self-respect if I had not done what I have done."

I have not the slightest sympathy either with Mr. Everett or for him. The man who resorts to such means for carrying Church measures as he so deeply planned and so sedulously worked, by that very act outlaws himself from Christian society. The individual who, instead of speaking his mind in the assemblies of the fraternity of which he is a favoured member, prefers to devote himself to the stealthy stabbing of invaluable reputations is not the sort of soldier to defend whose honour I would risk my own.

But there is a sort of dabblers in the waters of strife to whom the last warning words of David still apply : "The man who shall touch them must be fenced with iron and the staff of a spear." Nothing could be plainer than that Mr. Everett had made up his mind either to achieve his purpose or to divide the Wesleyan Methodist Connexion. Was it wise to supply him with the desired and the handiest facilities for accomplishing that object? Yet this was the very thing that was actually done. The course taken gave to Mr. Everett, his *Fly Sheets*, and his other machinations, a factitious importance, an effectiveness and successfulness, greatly beyond anything they could have otherwise effected. I cannot but think that if Mr. Fowler's counsel of the non-notice of anonymous vituperation were not adopted, the next best course would have been to follow the advice of Messrs. A. E. Farrar, Vevers, and the Book Steward, to try Mr. Everett in the regular and precedented way, by Minor District Meeting. This would have met his own challenge : "If I am the most suspected, there must be some evidence against me ; produce it." Assuredly it would have needed no prodigious development of the forensic faculty so to cross-question Mr. Everett, and the ministers who were known to know who the author really was, and so to present the evidence thus adduced that no five Wesleyan Methodist ministers could pretend to doubt his authorship. If he chose two of his closest friends, say Mr. Walton and Mr. Burdsall, or Mr. Griffith, they knew perfectly well that he was the author. The wary, shrewd, experienced Book Steward was not the man to say "I think I know" without some clue, which the close connection of the establishment of which he was the head with the general book trade and the "Row" had



put into his hands. In this way Mr. Everett would have lost his strongest, keenest weapon. The point of this weapon was the precedent which he claimed to have followed in the position he took up in Conference, and for maintaining which he was expelled. The most honoured member of the Conference had repeatedly assumed the ground which he had occupied, in some foregoing Conferences. He said in this: "I will submit to the humiliation of a trial, if my accusers will show themselves." Mr. Everett said: "I demand the name of my accuser and the charge in writing, and the opportunity to defend myself in a constitutional way."

And was it not a very serious blunder for the Conference to go out of its way to move a vote of thanks to the *Watchman* after having expelled two ministers for the express reason that they declined to promise not to write for or to the *Wesleyan Times*, and to give up the *Wesley Banner*, unless other brethren would make the like agreement not to write for the *Watchman* any longer? This action of the Conference, in the eyes of many thousands of Methodists, gave to the expulsion of Messrs. Dunn and Griffith the appearance of a party triumph. For had not the *Watchman*, they argued, let itself be made the organ of a party by its impertinent interference with Conference in the election of its President, by its offensive efforts to prevent the election of such an eminent and worthy minister as the Secretary of the Conference and Chairman of the London District, and by advocating the adoption by Conference of a mode of expulsion unprecedented in its extremeness and its questionable lawfulness?

Another lamentable error was the putting on the powerful committee for the examination of the accused, and for a drawing up a recommendation on their case for the adoption of Conference—a committee which, being composed of ex-Presidents and Chairmen of Districts, could not be thought unequal to the work—of three Manchester ministers, who had no such dignity or training for the work. This was done in spite of Mr. William Bunting's strong remonstrance that the very reason given for adding them to the committee was the strongest possible ground for keeping them away—namely, that they were mixed up with the affair—a ground clearly for their appearing before the court, but, according to all notions of propriety and justice, decisively prohibitory of their being

assessors in the Conference. The putting Dr. Osborn on the committee was too much like the placing of the prosecutor on a case of judicial arbitration and appeal. And as to his two colleagues, whatsoever commendable qualities of Thomas Fuller's "diamonds" they might possess, they were proverbial in the Body for "cuttingness and hardness." There was, indeed, a sort of stern naïveté in the reason given by the President for putting those three particular brethren on, their having "been painfully mixed up with the matter from the beginning," which made the simple-minded public raise its eyebrows in surprise. Their selection could not have been made with a view to eke out the efficiency of the ex-Presidents and Chairmen of the Districts. To what, then, was it due? "To impartial men," as Mr. William Bunting said, "it had a strong feature of unfairness."

The next mistake was the carrying into Circuit administration the like extreme measures to those which had been resorted to in Conference, and the applying to the people the repressive and hard-handed policy which had been adopted by the Pastors to their own order.

The next grave blunder was the postponing by the Conference of 1850 of the consideration of the memorials from Circuits till Conference was at its last gasp and the fugitive moment was refusing to stay, and their turning a deaf ear to the counsel of such men as John Scott, William Bunting, George Macdonald, William Arthur, and Dr. Beaumont to appoint a committee to consider these memorials in the spirit of conciliation and concession. Can anyone indulge a moment's doubt that if our dear and honoured friend, Mr. T. P. Bunting, could have seen his way to propose in 1850 the wise pacific measure which he so zealously promoted a quarter of a century later, in 1875, many thousands of attached, devoted Methodists would have been saved to our community? Was it not, however, at the latter date a pleasant and instructive spectacle to see the two distinguished sons of the two noble men who had so often confronted each other in discussion now combined in the most peaceful and beneficial development of our policy?

The "proceedings" of the Conference of 1849 are rightly described as "often greatly excited." And, unhappily, this excitedness of many of the Pastors had not died down when their own sheepfolds were regained. It is only just to say that the excitedness of the Conference was mainly due to its

environment. Had it been held elsewhere than in Manchester, a more sedate and sober spirit would doubtless have prevailed. But Manchester was the headquarters of what had now become the party of expulsion. Had the President and the Conference been left to the dictates and the intuitions of their own devout and simple hearts, no such resemblances to a Parisian Parliament could have come upon them. But the expulsion of the two editors of the *Wesley Banner*, as well as of the author of the *Fly Sheets*, was a predetermined item of the Manchester programme. That Banner must "to earth be borne."

In the wonderful Icelandic saga, *Gretta the Outlaw*, we are told that, in a case involving even the possible temporary outlawry of a freeman, the topography of jurisprudence was most strictly guarded, with a view to the most absolute isolation of the court and the accused pending the proceedings. The place selected was a mound which rose within the crater of an extinct volcano. It was carpeted by nature with flower-besprinkled, dew-bright moss. The court and the accused were sufficiently but soberly provisioned, like a garrison in a state of siege, so that no eye-blinding hospitalities or importunate household consolations might in the least imperil the clearness and straightforwardness of kindly, honest-hearted judgment. Poor, unadvanced, yet not unevangelised Icelanders!

The Conference of 1849 might possibly have been some little less "excited" had some sub-Arctic safeguard of the kind been thought of and available. In that case the discussions would have been more like deliberations and less like concussions and collisions. But the Manchester party seem to have felt that the time was now or not at all, the place Manchester or nowhere. Hence the hot haste with which the risky matter was rushed on. At the Conference of 1848 not a word was said about Declaration or *Fly Sheets*. Mr. Dunn had been nominated for election into the Legal Conference, and received sixty-eight votes. Dr. Osborn and Mr. Griffith had stood shoulder to shoulder in opposing the recommendations of the Education Committee to accept the State scheme and the State subsidy. No one dreamt that at the next Conference Declaration and *Fly Sheets* would be summoned from the shades, and at Dr. Osborn's instance Dunn and Griffith expelled.

There is great hazard of more haste than speed in driving at

high pressure in the dark a mighty steamship, with all its precious freight of human lives and human interests, by trying a short cut into an unfrequented strait, with perilous proximity to islands, reefs and headlands, and sunken rocks. Who can wonder if there comes a shock, a crash, and lamentable loss of life?

The last consummating blunder, as it seemed and seems to me, was the resolute refusal to hold parley with the "delegates" from the disturbed Circuits. This was in striking contrast with the action of the critical Conference of 1795, and a signal departure from that auspicious precedent of a truly patriarchal policy. I cannot but still think, in those points in which the policy of 1850-51 departed from the policy of 1795-97, the middle of the present century showed to no little disadvantage as compared with the closing years of that which saw the rise of Methodism.

It is needful, in conclusion, to glance at Dr. Osborn's speech, delivered at the call of the Chair as a prelude to the expulsions of 1849, and in vindication of his reissue, without leave of Conference and in the new and avowed character of a discriminating "test," of the Declaration issued expressly by "permission" of an earlier Conference. This gave the keynote to the whole tone of the proceedings.

Dr. Osborn: "Why, it is asked, should there not be two parties in the Conference as well as in the House of Commons who both claim to be strictly loyal to the Constitution, however they may be divided on questions of administration?" This will be seen at once to be a point of such gravity and import that it has not been exaggerated by his own epithets, "vital to the existence and prosperity of Methodism." He gives to the question a positive and peremptory negative, and states the ground on which he builds. "Political parties are based entirely on political considerations. Methodism exists for a purely spiritual purpose: To spread *Scriptural* holiness throughout the world, to nourish that Divine principle in the individual heart." Hence he maintained there can be in the Conference nothing like a "Government party" and an "Opposition."

In truth, a Government party in the Conference is neither needed nor admissible, since there is no *Government in Conference*, save the President for the year. But is this an absolute security against an actual governing party and the consequent inevitability, and even the necessity, of some kind of opposition? Methodism has no *Cabinet*, no *Ministry*—in the secular sense of the word—to direct its Pastoral ministry in the Church sense. And Dr. Osborn's distinction between a community based upon "political considerations" and a *Connexion* like that of the people called

Methodists is solid and important, and quite relevant to the question of the legitimacy of party distinctions in the Wesleyan Methodist Conference. Indeed, so long as Church politics are conducted on New Testament principles there can be no such thing as party in the New Testament conception of that idea. No one word, indeed, occurs in the Greek Testament which could be fairly rendered by the English "party." St. Paul uses the phrase, however, which we find in classic Greek—*e.g.* Thucydides—that comes nearest to our modern English term and modern English notion, party. "I am of Paul," "I am of Apollos," "I am of Cephas," is a true Greek mode of expressing our idea of "party"—meaning, "I am of Paul's party," etc. For the original conception of a party was that of the personal following of some special leader. Then came that of individuals banded together for some common object, like Paul's "them of the circumcision," those who were bent on making circumcision as well as baptism a necessary condition of membership in the Christian Church. They thus formed a party in the Church, inasmuch as they strove to make their own particular preferences and notions obligatory on all their brethren, and combined for the attainment of that object. They thus came within the meaning of the word used by the classic Latin writers to designate a party—*Studium: a fondness, a study, a zeal or enthusiasm for any particular person or project*. Now this is pronounced in the New Testament to be inadmissible in the politics of the city of God, "the commonwealth of Israel," though so common in and, as it were, indigenous to the noblest States of heathendom, such as Athens, Rome, and Carthage. To adopt such individualistic practices, and to indulge proclivities of this sort, is to "walk as men," to aspire to no higher moral and spiritual plane than the statesmen, the orators, and heroes of "this present world." If you can stoop to this, "Are ye not carnal?" or at best but babes in Christ, incapable as yet of any more spiritual or moral aliment than the spoon-meat of an Aristotle or a Cicero? What are its tactics but "fleshly wisdom"? "But our rejoicing is this, the testimony of our conscience that, not with fleshly wisdom but by the grace of God, we have our polity in this world, and more abundantly toward you"—*i.e.* in our Church relations.

Now the principles of the domestic policy of "the household of faith" preclude all partisanship of this mundane, ethnic sort. Its axioms are such as these: "Ye younger, submit yourselves unto the elder," and "Yea, all of you be subject one to another,

and be clothed with humility" (1 Peter v. 5). Humility, then, is the senatorial robe of dignity and grace. Finally, "Be ye all of one mind, having compassion one of another: love as brethren, be pitiful, be courteous: not rendering evil for evil, or railing for railing: but contrariwise blessing" (1 Peter iii. 8, 9). "My beloved brethren, let every man be swift to hear, slow to speak, slow to wrath: for the wrath of man worketh not the righteousness of God" (James i. 19, 20).

These golden rules were not made for one side of a Church Council to silence and suppress the other with, nor for the stronger to enforce upon the weaker; nor for one brother to "begin to beat his fellow-servants" with. They were made for each side to curb itself withal; and for each one to enforce upon his own unruly heart and tongue. And these rules can in no wise be safely put in force by penal enactment, nor imposed upon a minority by vote of a majority. "The brotherly question" must be brotherly at both ends, or it will snap to pieces in the middle. It will not work for one brother, least of all if he be on the platform or in the Chair, to call another brother out into the aisle, and say with authority, or vociferate with clamour: "None of your explanations: Yes or No, or out you go." Of a truth, it is impossible for a brotherhood like the Methodist Conference to "hang together in firm accord and concord," excepting by the silken, fine-twined cord of a heartfelt instinct of brotherly affection. But you might as well expect a frozen millstream to grind your corn, as depend upon a bounding, leaping, onward-bearing sentiment to turn hard grains into a home batch, when you have it congealed into a statute to be enforced "with the utmost rigour of the law."

In like manner the signatures to any declaration lose all their value as evidence of "brotherly love," and all their validity as guarantee for its continuance, if the autograph be procured under pressure, or under pain of seeing his name upon a black list if he will not put it on the white one. Such procedure in Methodism was a nineteenth-century invention. Mr. Wesley's Agreement was purely optional. It began with a truly brotherly compact between the two brothers, John and Charles, and was at first signed by them only. It simply bound the brothers to act in concert in carrying on their great evangelistic enterprise. Their devoted friend Perronet afterwards signed the document. The few Preachers present at the Conference signed this or a similar document. But it bore not the slightest kinship or likeness to a

"test." The Liverpool Minutes, which Dr. Osborn had to count along with Wesley's Agreement in order to make up his four precedents for the test of 1849, was not and is not presented to and pressed on the brethren to be signed ; nor were or are they personally pestered with questions as to why they do not sign them.

The capital mistake in Dr. Osborn's fateful speech in 1849 was his failing to distinguish between an honest party and a faction. The history of party in England, which begins with the Restoration, is resplendent with the noblest proofs that a man can be a member of a party without being a partisan. One has only to name the last Conservative First Lord of the Treasury and the last Liberal Secretary of State for India to carry this point by acclamation. Factions may, to serve their own purposes, help or hamper parties ; but you *may* not charge with bitter, unjust partisanship men like Peel, Russell, or Forster.

For our purposes it is enough to say that a party, in the condemnatory sense, is the following a particular individual ; the being "puffed up for one against another," or the being bound together to upset or override an act in contravention of a promulgation of the supreme Church Council, as did "they of the circumcision" in apostolic times. But in this sense there had been no such thing as an Opposition in the Methodist Conference. From Kilham to Warren, 1796-1835, there had been no member of the Conference whose name had become a party designation among the people called Methodists, with the terminal addition "*ite*." And neither of these leaders of secession had any formidable following in the Conference itself. True, men who were in spirit partisans, resorted to the trickery of branding as disloyal all who would not share in their own divisive measures. But the branders, not the branded, were the veritable partisans.

There had never been any organised or factious opposition in the Conference itself ; never any band of men who made it their business, nor any individual minister who took upon himself the functions of a Connexional supervisor or censor, or sniffing sanitary inspector, self-elected to the office and work of a fault finder with departmental officers. The men who acted as a check upon the braced-up ecclesiasticism of Dr. Bunting and his school were united rather by a common principle than by a common project. There was, indeed, a *very small anti-Bunting* section in the Conference, but one could count them on his

fingers. Our friend Mr. T. P. Bunting enables us to catch in a teaspoon the first ooze and trickle of this tiny waterway: "Other members of the (Missionary) Committee adopted, more or less, the views of the majority of the Secretaries; whilst by this time" (1823) "there was a secret feeling amongst a very few that Bunting must not always have his own way." ("Life," p. 563.)

This secret feeling amongst a very few in the Missionary Committee soon found its way into the Conference, as we learn from the same unquestionable authority, and also found expression both in colloquy and correspondence during Conference time. Neither the "secret feeling" nor the softly spoken and impersonal notion was effectually put down by the attitude assumed and the position taken up by Dr. Bunting when older men than he felt bound to ask in Conference by what authority the authority of Conference had been summarily set aside by public acts. What his answer was we have seen.

A few began to think that this was a little too much like an invaluable and unmatched servant saying: "I'll render you unstinted and untiring service on this simple, sole condition, that you let me do pretty much what I like." It was this masterful element in his nature that stood in the way of his universal popularity. Like his great historic prototype Pericles, he was too indifferent to popularity and to the sensibilities and susceptibilities of other men. On great occasions he seldom seemed so much himself as when dealing with such a text as: "Curse ye Meroz, curse ye bitterly the inhabitants thereof; because they came not up to the help of the Lord, to the help of the Lord against the mighty," or "I am doing a great work, so that I cannot come down." Of this he seemed to be well aware, as appeared from his reply to Mr. Chapell's observation: "I am afraid of Dr. Bunting's making concessions to clamour." Dr. Bunting: "I am altogether the other way."

Hence, in a letter written by a minister referring to the Conference of 1823, we find these sentences: "Mr. Bunting has not talked so much as I have heard him on former occasions. Some of the brethren think that Mr. Bunting has too much power." ("Life," p. 567.) This statement was quite true, and the number of ministers who received this impression gradually increased; but Mr. Fowler's Journal clearly shows that Dr. Bunting's most redoubtable opponents never gave the least obstruction to any of his measures just because he started them. On the contrary, they were all the more eager to support every



one of his proposals of which they could approve, in order to demonstrate that their opposition was altogether free from factiousness. Mr. Dunn was the one exception.

The underlying fallacy in our dear friend Dr. Osborn's fateful speech consisted in the strange assumption that in Wesleyan Methodism a majority can never be a party. A party is such whether in power or out of power; whether it can command a majority or not. And if there ever was a party in Methodist history, it was that of the *Papers on Wesleyan Matters*, which had also for the time being gained predominance on the rota of the *Watchman*, outtalking quiet men like Mr. Farmer.

And it was this that gave, in the eyes of myriads of the Methodists, as well as of the outside public generally, such an exasperating look of unfairness and high-handedness to the expulsion of Dunn and Griffith on the express ground that they refused to pledge themselves to abstain from writing for the *Wesleyan Times*, and to give up the *Wesley Banner*, unless other brethren would promise to desist from carrying on the warfare in the *Watchman*, and not to publish party organs on the other side. It seemed to be scarcely equal-handed to pass a vote of thanks to one newspaper for intermeddling with strictly Conferential matters, even to the extent of designating the next President and advocating the extremest possible measures in Conference management of its own members, whilst it expelled two ministers for insisting on the right of reply to an aggressive and assumptive carrying on of the debate by their opponents all the year round.

The fact is, Methodism was made a shuttlecock between the battledores of two extreme parties. Hence the conspicuous absence of what fine old Mr. Scarth of Leeds was ever urging—tenderness for Methodism. Hence the thrusting aside of that gentle dealing, and that sensitive and scrupulous comity, which so befits the Christian Pastorate.

I trust that this volume will, to some extent, accomplish its main purposes. These are :—

To vindicate for some right noble ministers of Christianity their true place and their fair significance in the Constitutional history of Methodism. The Centenary of the Wesleyan Methodist Constitution is, in fact, drawing to its close. *The Leeds Regulations* of 1797 completed our documentary Constitution.

The Plan of Pacification in 1795, and its completion in 1797, have been recognised as our *Magna Charta* and our *Bill of Rights*. But, the shaping hypothesis of Wesleyan

Methodist polity, as we have seen, was the outbirth of the brain of the greatest ecclesiastical statesman which Methodism has ever yet produced. Some very able, earnest men, however, as we have seen, thought that his forceful and unfaltering policy had, as the sailors say, a little too much *list*—*i.e.* onesided impetus; and that his grand, gigantic personal qualities would be at once more serviceable and more safe if kept under vigilant and kindly check. They, therefore, ever and again essayed to slacken speed a little, and to correct his leanings by timely and fraternal questioning, which was justly judged to be essential to the working of our system. But, as we have also seen, this course brought the leal-hearted and sagacious men who followed it into disrepute with writers who were bent on making Dr. Bunting's "policy" or, as he explained it, "course of action," to be identical with Methodism. Now it so happens that all the men who, since the death of Benson, sometimes took in Conference a diverse view of things from that of Dr. Bunting, I still vividly remember them, having heard them all, from Wood, who came out in 1773, and died in the year in which I entered the ministry, 1840; Henry Moore, who came out in 1779, and died in the year in which I was ordained, and Richard Reece, who, as supernumerary, was a member of my own congregation in Great Queen Street chapel; to Thomas Galland, Joseph Fowler, and Joseph Beaumont. My connection with these men is, in my heart's just estimation, prized above all price. No other minister now living knew them half so well as I did.

The charge of factiousness, when brought against any of these true ministers of Christ, recoils upon the man who brings it. They were as loyal and leal Methodists as was any one of the men who strove to make the public think them otherwise. Being human, they were not impeccable. Dr. Beaumont had, so far as I could see, but one serious fault. His absence from his Circuit full three-quarters of his time, and his enormous popularity, made him an inconsiderate and an unsympathetic colleague, oppressing his already over-burdened juniors with work which in all fairness and equality belonged to him. In this respect he was the reverse of Mr. Fowler, who was as thoughtful of his colleagues as he was unsparing and exacting to himself. But Dr. Beaumont was a mighty Methodist Preacher, a true pastor when he was hastily visiting the home-close; and, when my Superintendent, was a most firm

and faithful and, therefore, a most gentle and most gracious administrator, an exemplary Pastoral Chairman of a Quarterly Meeting or a Leaders' Meeting, and the best addresser of a Society Meeting, and one of the best conductors of a Covenant Service, that I ever met with. It is, therefore, painful to find mistaken and misleading statements with regard to him still repeated where they are most likely to produce a wrong impression. For example, is it not unfortunate that he is said to have been ruled out of order and solemnly censured from the Chair? His question was not ruled out of order by its own merits. The fact is, as we have seen, he was ruled out of order and censured from the Chair for being in the Conference with no other authority than that of the President, who gave the ruling and pronounced the censure. "He ought not to be here, therefore he ought not to be heard," was Dr. Bunting's pronouncement on the case. So far from being blameworthy on that occasion, Dr. Beaumont did the Conference great service, as he did on many subsequent occasions. And Mr. Fowler did himself and Methodism no discredit in nominating for election into the Hundred one of the best as well as most brilliant preachers in the Body. I confess it hurts me to see injustice done to the memory of such ministers of Christ. To say that he was treated with tenderness ("Life of Dr. Bunting") by the Conference in being only censured from the Chair for not calling a Special District Meeting to convict a member who had been acquitted by his Leaders' Meeting is to affirm that he ought at least to have been disqualified for any future Superintendency, for having acted in accordance with the advice of Dr. Bunting in 1835, and for not having made the *Sixth* London Circuit a ruin like the *Third*.

The faint praise doled out to a man like Mr. Galland in the same beautiful biography, along with the partisan indictment, is also most distasteful to one who had far better opportunities of knowing him than the writer who discounts his claims on Methodism with such an air and obvious feeling of an exhausting stretch of generosity.

Next to my duty to my colleagues, and to my personal and hereditary obligations, must be placed my duty to my beloved people. I trust that I have shown that in this unhappy conflict the sentiment and object of the expelled lay office-bearers and their adherents was not wholly and only

anti-Methodistic or anti-ministerial. In the Third London Circuit, although the minority of male and female Class Leaders and the Stewards who remained were, on the whole, the cream of the cream, yet the majority who left were at heart most loving and devoted Methodists. Whilst I lived in the Tower Hamlets I often thought of Cowper's saying: "I daresay there are people living in Wapping and in Ratcliffe Highway whom it would be worth living in Wapping or in Ratcliffe Highway to get to know." Assuredly I became acquainted with many denizens of those dingy, dusty thoroughfares whose character and habits showed that their citizenship was in Heaven, and whose solidity and spiritual polish marked them out to be the King's own in the day when He "makes up His jewels." And so it was in all Circuits with which I was acquainted where the paroxysm was the sharpest and the dividing chasm was the deepest. It was so in Manchester. This I afterwards discovered, when the chief seceders were my zealous fellow-labourers in the work of the Lord, such as Howarth, Norburry, and Kelly, not to mention gentlemen like Johnson, who joined himself to Union Chapel, and became a strong and stately pillar in Dr. Maclaren's goodly Church. It was even so in the Belper and the Ripley Circuits, where the rent was most decisive and disastrous. It was so in Rochester, where politics had naught to do with the contention, and where the leaders on both sides had worked together from their youth in the most pleasant and most well-beseeming unity. It was so at Rawtenstall, where the two fair sanctuaries have so long stood side by side, like the rival rocks of some narrow, deep ravine, riven by Plutonic force, as monuments of ghastly earthquake.

It is not enough to say "Faults on both sides" ; that, alas ! is but too true. But what is that but superfluous commonplace ? Is it not included in the very fact that the combatants were as human on the one side as the other ? What I am in a position and, thank God, in a disposition to affirm is, that there were on both sides virtues, graces, and loyal love to Methodism. And what can be the harm of saying this ? Mutual confession is surely as respectable and Christian as mutual crimination and mutual upbraiding. The seceders have set us the example of confession. Mr. Kirsop, in his history of the Methodist Free Churches, does himself and those Churches the honour of admitting the indefensible wrongness of some of the main tactical

positions taken up by the reformers; and Mr. Chew, the biographer of Everett and of Griffith, admits that the *Fly Sheets* were "betrayed into" personalities and intermeddling with the private affairs of public men. ("Life of Everett," p. 364.) It should, then, be confessed on our side that in the mode in which the three ministers were expelled, and in the way in which these expulsions were contrived and brought about, there was much that seemed questionable and exasperating in the eyes of simple-minded, honest-hearted Methodists, who loved the Methodist ministers without respect of parties.

Surely the palliation which Dr. George Smith suggests of the anonymous detractions and attacks on the precious character of estimable ministers, whom their brethren and the Connexion thought worthy of all honour, should be available also in extenuation of the sympathisers with ministers whom they thought to be too hardly dealt with, by the way in which they had been summarily deprived of their maintenance and status. Detraction was done deliberately and in a monthly organ, and without provocation or foundation in fact. In the "Life of Dr. Bunting" we find this statement: "There is no doubt that the disaffected party had more or less confidently calculated upon Mr. Fowler's sympathy." If so, who put that preposterous idea into their disaffected heads? *The Papers on Wesleyan Matters*, and that with the object of keeping Mr. Fowler out of the Chair of the Conference.

My position, then, on this point is simply this. That anonymous detraction of ministerial and official character, with a view to the accomplishment of Church measures, is only evil continually, and that the better the cause which is attempted to be served by any such expedient the more reprehensible and the more mischievous is the resort to such ignoble and ungodly tactics. Is not this the right reply to anyone who expresses a holy indignation against anonymous misrepresentation, and forthwith betakes himself to the self-same ill-favoured and unsavoury tactics against honest, honourable servants of the Master? "Therefore thou art inexcusable, O man, *whosoever* thou art . . . for wherein thou judgest another, thou condemnest thyself; for thou that judgest doest the same things. But we are sure that the judgment of God is, according to truth, against them that commit such things. And thinkest thou this, O man, that judgest them which do such things, and doest the same, that thou shalt escape the judgment of God?" (Rom. ii. 1-3.) "Will

ye speak wickedly for God, and talk deceitfully for Him?" (Job xiii. 7.)

I trust also that I have not altogether failed in my sincere endeavour to present to the public and posterity the personality and the policy of the greatest ecclesiastical statesman our Church has ever seen.

My honest aim has been to place before my readers the veritable Jabez Bunting. It has seemed to me that I should thus do truer justice to that great and good man, and render a more solid and enduring service to the Church of which he was for so long a time both the guard and the ennobling ornament, and, at the same time, best discharge my own indebtedness to the tenderness and sympathy of by far the strongest man I ever knew, than by sketching an ideal hero.

I humbly hope that I have also been enabled to pour some light upon what I know has been an inscrutable historic mystery to many lovingly inquiring minds—how it came to pass that the catastrophe of 1849 assumed such terrible dimensions. It is truly said in the "Life of Dr. Bunting" that "the full history will never be written." But surely that is no sufficient reason why a fair history should not be written? No one can condemn too strongly anonymous attacks upon the character of ministers of Christ—invaluable to their flocks as well as to themselves; or violence and virulence of language in dispute amongst pastors or between pastors and people; or party agitation in the Church of Christ. But let us show our sincerity and truthfulness by blaming these sore evils most severely when they are committed on behalf of that which we have ourselves espoused as the right side.

Butler's lines are often quoted:

"Atone for sins we are inclined to  
By damning those we have no mind to."

Might one venture to "cap" that couplet thus:

"Vent holy wrath on crimes we curse,  
By perpetrating something worse."

It would be too painfully easy to match the intemperate and exasperating language employed upon the one side in that fierce fratricidal conflict by too servile and successful imitations on the other.

I may well expect to have the brotherly question put to me which I had to answer at the time. On my way from

London to the Newcastle Conference in 1851 it was my good hap to have as my companions in travel, in the same compartment, a band of honest, hearty men from Mr. Fowler's birthplace. They soon found me out to be a Methodist minister, whereupon their first question was: "Do ye belong to t' Reform Party or to t' Owd Body?" My answer then must be my answer now: "By God's grace I shall always belong to the *Old Body*, but never to any Methodist *party*, either out of it or *in* it."

And the first lesson of this book should be: Beware of anything which might favour the formation of party in the Wesleyan Methodist Conference and Connexion. Of course, I mean party in the sense condemned in the New Testament—the being "puffed up for one against another," the dividing of the Conference, and therefore the Connexion, into two confronting camps. To escape this there must be no aggregation or magnetic massing around any leader with a following intent on drawing Methodism in some particular direction, or into some particular organisation other than the native and specific organism shaped for it by its inner life. There must be no combination within the Connexion which might be fitly designated by the termination "*ite*," such as Kilhamite or Warrenite, needing a special organ, in the shape of newspaper or other periodical, to set forth and propagate its views and aims. Such schemes should be religiously discountenanced.

The maxims of Thomas Galland and Jabez Bunting might be safely acted upon: "I dread extremes; but the extreme of Radicalism is worse than the extreme of Conservatism." (Mr. Galland in Mixed Committee.) "Ultraism and love of change for change's or for theory's sake will be fatal," Dr. Bunting wrote to the "consultative meeting" in London in 1852.

No greater peril to a Connexion of Churches could be more easily contrived than a newspaper after the fashion of the *Christian Advocate* and the *Wesleyan Times*, propelled by "ultraism and love of change for change's sake or for theory's sake." When once a paper is set a-going as the bassinet of some vociferous hypothesis its own *working hypothesis* must always be:

"Rock! a bye, Baby, on the tree-top!  
While the wind blows, the cradle will rock,  
When the wind ceases, the cradle will fall!  
Down will come cradle and Baby and all!"

If the fire of faction is burning low, every party-housemaid knows what next to do ; bring a newspaper and spread it out along the bars, and if that will not raise a flame, it is very near its end.

In the most solemn, serious words, but to the same effect, we are admonished : " Also of your own selves will men arise speaking perverse things, seeking to draw away disciples after them " (St. Paul to the Ephesian Elders). It is one of the commonplaces of history that your successful demagogue always makes the most thorough despot.

If a man in the seventy-eighth year of his age, and the fifty-eighth of his ministry, may be allowed a word of warning and of forecast on the present outlook, I would just repeat the admonition of the clear-sighted ex-President Gaultier, in his last speech in Conference : " If ever Methodism be destroyed, it will be from within." So long as it continues to be Methodism, it is indestructible. On this point I would commend to the consideration of my readers the speeches of my old friend Mr. James Heald, of Stockport, delivered in the mixed committees, and those of Richard Reece, Dr. Dixon, and especially that of Mr. F. A. West at the first Hull Conference fifty years ago, bearing on this very point.

Methodism can only continue to subsist by fidelity to itself, to its original idea. It is no use trying to conjure by the name of Methodism. The deepest principle of Machiavelli's statecraft was : " If you want to supplant an institution which has endeared itself to people by the benefits it has conferred, let its name be the last thing you attempt to change. Glory in the name ; be the fondest professed adherent to it. Let all your proposed changes be professedly for the sole purpose of increasing its efficiency and removing obstructions from its progress ; when you have changed it by degrees into what you want to make it, then will be the time for giving it a name more suited to the thing you have transformed it into." The peril at the present time is from those who are, consciously or unconsciously, acting out this policy.

If Methodism is to " renew its youth like the eagle," that can only be by resolute adherence or by prompt recurrence to its primal principles and teachings, and thus replenish with new life the channels which its life-force originally made. Let us go back to the head-springs of its history. It arose out of the dim recesses of a hard, cold mountain rift, and " won its widening way " by its own heaven-imparted impetus, till it became an



"exalting and abounding river," spreading out ever and again into limpid lakes of heaven-reflecting purity.

"Thou didst spring from caverns darkling,  
Leaping bright from rock to rock,  
Pure as mountain-child and sparkling,  
Glad at every dash and shock.

"Pent no more in rock-worn basin,  
*Mixed with many a sister brook,*  
Soon thy gladsome waters hasten  
Onwards from their silent nook.

"Now the quiet vale hath led thee  
'Neath the green and mossy brake,  
And the hand of Nature spread thee  
In a fair and crystal lake."

What is to preserve it in its crystal clearness, in its freshness and beauty? Nothing but the perpetual and continuous inflow of "the vital stream, God's holy word." This only can preserve it from plague-breeding stagnancy, and force for it an outlet into the weedy waste of unbelief, indifference, and worldliness and immorality.

Will Methodism "continue so long as the moon endureth," as John Wesley did his best to make assurance doubly sure? To answer this intelligently we must first determine in what the real vital continuity of the Methodist or of any other Church consists. This essential question the inspiring Spirit has already answered. The vital cord of a Church's continuity is the purity, integrity, and identity of its doctrinal entrustment, and the true Apostolic succession in its ministry is the connected line of Apostolic men who preach the Apostolic doctrine with Apostolic faith and faithfulness. "That which thou hast heard, the *same* commit thou to faithful men who shall be able to teach others also." And the cord of our *continuity* as a Church is in like manner the cord of our "*Connexion* as a veritable Church" at "unity with itself" and "a city compact together." It is a fanatical illusion to suppose that a free Church, not clamped together by State patronage and State authority, can long keep itself together as a veritable *Connexion*, after it has let slip or loosened its doctrinal unity, along with its systematic Pastoral oversight and its mutual upbuilding. In the divinely designed Tabernacle no pains were spared to give to the symbolic structure the most perfect symmetry and unity. The cerulean

curtains, of most choice material and the fittest, firmest texture, were all of corresponding pattern and all fashioned to the same ideal. And they were all most carefully connected by golden "taches" and by strong elastic couplings, and its shapely pillars were closely fitted with silver sockets, so that it might be "*one tabernacle*" whilst consisting of so many parts. And this is the true New Testament ideal of the Christian Church. "The whole body fitly framed together and compacted."

Even those who seem the most solicitous to hush to sleep solicitude with regard to the ministerial question: "Does he *believe and preach our doctrines?*" do not affect for one moment to deny that it is to the definiteness of its doctrines and the intensity of personal conviction with which they have been preached that Methodism owes its triumphs in the past. It was "to make this preaching fully known" that John and Charles Wesley forsook all and followed the Divine Preacher Who "went through the villages and cities preaching" repentance, faith, and holiness. Out of Methodist preaching sprang the Methodist *experience*, and out of the experience sprang the Class meeting and the Class Leader, a mighty band binding together the strong close structure of our Church organisation, including our whole system of finance. Everyone admits this, even amongst those who seem most anxious to forget the fact. But I feel it on my conscience to reiterate the Apostolic warning: "Beware lest *any* man despoil you through philosophy and vain conceit and oppositions of science, falsely so called." If we allow ourselves to be disinherited of the doctrines which have thus far proved the sources of our spiritual life—that inward experience which made the Class Meeting at once a necessity and a luxury to the awakened soul—we drain off the very sources of that life. How can we keep our young people to Methodism, unless we keep Methodism for them to keep to? And if our experience dwindles, be ye well assured that our finance will follow. What was it that made the poorest churches in the land, the Methodist communities, a proverb of and a provocative to a lavish liberality? It was joy and peace through believing. Let that run low, and we shall soon find ourselves in low water as to all our funds, whether Circuit or Connexional.

"Stop the supplies" was much more an arousing than a terrifying signal-shout when it touched only collections and subscriptions, a penny a week and a shilling a quarter. When a Superintendent told the Conference that the Warrenites had got

all the chapels in his Circuit which were not upon the Model Deed, Dr. Bunting nobly told him to go out into the streets and lanes and fields and commons and preach the doctrines that our fathers preached, and in the way they preached them, and we should soon have as good chapels or better ones, or as big chapels or bigger.

"Oh! but our chapels are on the Model Deeds, and that secures them to our doctrines." So every honest-hearted Methodist would think. But just suppose that a low, loose, higher casuistry policy should steal in upon us, and bring in a low, loose code of honesty and honour as to ministerial pledges and avowals. Whereabouts should we be then? Busy as he is, it would be worth the devil's while to build and "settle" any number of Methodist chapels if, on our part, we would let him supply the pulpit with men who have adopted that hypothesis.

The twentieth century, the third millennium of the Christian era, may find "Methodism" a momentary millionaire. But if this new working hypothesis as to ministerial honesty and honour be permitted to prevail, what legal instrument can secure to us any longer the consonance, integrity, and unity of doctrine which has been hitherto the secret of our strength and success, and must ever be "the ark of our magnificent and awful cause"?

Sometimes a rhythmic epigram has done good service in the political and social history of England. When an attempt was made, in the interests of "cultivation," to enrich the wealthy at the poor man's cost, not many speeches or pamphlets did so much towards gaining fairer terms for the restricted labourer than a rhymed epigram which I may thus parallel :—

"If he with other thieves be locked in  
Who steals the *chapel* from the *doctrine* ;  
Who would not with the burglar grapple,  
Who steals the *doctrine* from the *chapel* ?"

No need of the prophetic gift to fore-announce to Methodism the certain consequence of a departure from the doctrines to which it owes its birth and its perennial vitality. A smattering of Church history will tell us that. We have but to glance at the chronicles of the two once great denominations most closely akin to Methodism, the one in polity—the English and the Irish Presbyterians—and the other in spirit—the

Society of Friends, our very next-of-kin in revivalistic aggression and in mutual upbuilding. Two centuries and a half ago, as we all know, the Presbyterians were the leading English Nonconformists. But what a feeble folk the English Presbyterians proper had become before the coalescence of the English Evangelic Presbyterians with the Scotch. For, be it borne in mind, the strong Presbyterian churches in England, such as James Hamilton's, Donald Fraser's, Dr. Macfarlane's in London, were the offspring of the *glorious* evangelical revival under Chalmers and his mates. What brought historic English Presbyterianism into such a pitiable plight numerically, financially, and as a missionary agency? It was the dalliance with "advanced" theology and no theology. In proportion as Presbyterianism in England and Ireland became Socinianised and Rationalised it became paralysed and pauperised. Read the paragraphs on Presbyterianism in Dr. Stoughton's "History of Religion in England," and tell us what you think.

And so of Quakerism. George Fox left at his death as many Quakers in the land as Wesley did of Methodists at his. Let those who measure Churches by statistics note the present position of the Society of Friends.

And how fell upon this spiritual, aggressive, philanthropic host such monetary shrinkage and depletion? Read "Its Internal History," by the noble Robert Barclay, late of Tottenham. "Read, and you will know."

The Hull Conference of 1898 will celebrate the Jubilee of the First Hull Conference, 1848. This was an epochal Conference, as we have seen. It closed with peaceful dignity the long and strong Protectorate of the mighty Jabez Bunting. Henceforth, until the next Hull Conference in 1858, which heard the reading of his obituary, his place was taken by a kind of Regency, or Mixed Committee of Management and of Control, a *Directory*, in which the lay element was perceptibly predominant.

"Our fathers, where are they? And the prophets, do they live for ever?" Where are all the mighties that then dignified the platform, and all the vigorous and able men who took part in the discussions? "They are all gone into the world of light." God forbid that we, their children, should undo their work through the vain attempts to mend it; or should sit by serenely and let it be transformed into another Methodism! Suffer the word of exhortation from the son and grandson of faithful, plodding Methodist Preachers. I would

venture to submit to all who feel an interest in the vital unity, the integrity and continuity, of Wesleyan Methodism, and the speedy accomplishment of its glorious mission amongst men, a few of the leading lessons to be learnt from this history : (1) The doctrine that the end sanctifies the means is to be excluded from Church politics. (2) It is a very dangerous course for the makers and administrators of the law to take the initiative in law-breaking, and thus to give their sanction to it. One of the office-bearers who were expelled without trial on the ground that they were self-excluded by attending a meeting of sympathy for the expelled ministers replied to an expostulation from me against violence of language : "If you bring down your boot-heel on my poor corns, I will not promise you to squeal by the gamut."

Last of all, I would implore my brethren (I have "not many fathers") to take a fresh and firmer grasp of "our doctrines and our pristine principles."

Let us not bequeath to the twentieth century of our era a crude and puffy product of the taste of the time under the delusive brand of the "thought of the time," instead of "the things that are revealed, which belong to us and to our *children*" also. By faithfulness to our past we shall best win the gratitude and reverence of all future generations. We shall retain the exhaustless recuperative energy of Wesleyan Methodism. Then shall be brought to pass the saying which is written : "Thy watchmen shall lift up the voice ; with the voice *together* shall they sing : for they shall *see eye to eye*, when the Lord shall bring again Zion," and "Thy people shall be freewill offerings in the day of Thy power : in the beauties of holiness, from the womb of the morning, Thou hast the dew of Thy youth."



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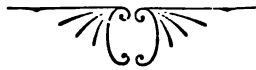
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